

## Witkoff reportedly meets Qatar PM on comprehensive deal amid scramble to stop Gaza takeover

*Hamas sources reportedly say intense ceasefire-hostage and disarmament talks underway to stave off Israeli occupation; Rubio blames impasse on France's Palestine recognition*

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 3:04 pm Updated at 8:09 pm



*US special envoy Steve Witkoff attends a trilateral signing with US President Donald Trump, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington, DC, on August 8, 2025 (ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS / AFP)*

**US special envoy Steve Witkoff met Qatari Prime Minister Abdulrahman al-Thani in Spain on Saturday to discuss an end to the Gaza war and the release of all 50 remaining hostages, the Axios news site reported, amid an apparent flurry of diplomatic activity aimed at heading off an Israeli plan to expand its Gaza offensive and occupy Gaza City.**

**Meanwhile, Ynet cited sources affiliated with Hamas as saying that the US, Qatar and Egypt were mediating in intense negotiations with Israel to prevent it from taking over the entire Gaza Strip, after the cabinet decided overnight Thursday-Friday to [conquer Gaza City](#) and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel's intention was to temporarily [take control of all of Gaza](#).**

**The [hostage-ceasefire proposal on the table](#) includes an end to the war, full Israeli withdrawal, demilitarization of Palestinian armed groups, exile of Hamas's military leaders and the establishment of a new civilian authority for Gaza, the sources were cited as saying, adding that Hamas was prepared to resume the fighting if the offer were rejected.**

**The [two reports came after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio appeared to endorse Israeli designs for Gaza while blaming the impasse in the truce-hostage talks](#) in part on France's decision to recognize Palestinian statehood.**

**Witkoff and al-Thani met in Ibiza as [Qatar and the US hoped to present a comprehensive true-hostage deal proposal to Israel and Hamas within the next two weeks](#), Axios said, citing two sources familiar with the meeting. The White House did not comment.**

**An Israeli cabinet minister cited by the news site said Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer informed the cabinet on Thursday that [Washington was working on an "End Game" proposal for the war. It was unclear from the report what the proposal entailed.](#)**



*Qatar's Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani speaks during a press conference with Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam (not pictured) in Doha, Qatar, on June 24, 2025. (Karim JAAFAR / AFP)*

**Dermer was said to have brought up the "End Game" plan before the cabinet approved the Gaza City takeover plan, with Dermer voting in favor, according to Hebrew media. An Israeli official involved in the negotiations was quoted by Axios as saying that "the gap between Israel and Hamas regarding ending the war is huge, so talking of a comprehensive deal is likely to be pointless at this stage."**

**There was still no harm in the US and Israel reaching an "End Game" plan on their own, the official was quoted as saying: "Our war is with Hamas, not with the US."**

**Axios also cited a senior Israeli official as saying that far-right minister Itamar Ben Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich voted against the plan approved by the security cabinet because Netanyahu indicated expanded military operations in Gaza would be halted if truce-hostage talks were renewed.**

The **decision to expand the fighting has sparked fierce criticism at home and abroad over concern that the move would endanger the hostages and deepen Gaza's humanitarian crisis.**

**Meanwhile, on Saturday, some 20 Arab and Muslim countries, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, condemned the decision as "a flagrant violation of international law," and an attempt to entrench the illegal occupation and impose a fait accompli... in contravention of international legitimacy."**



*Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (C) and Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer (R) speak with US envoy to the Mideast Steve Witkoff (L), during the premier's visit to Washington, DC on July 7, 2025. (Avi Ohayon/GPO)*

**Visiting Israel last week, Witkoff told hostage families that the US wanted to finish the war, not expand,** and was no longer interested in "piecemeal" truce-hostage deals like those previously discussed. Hostage families have also assailed the partial hostage deals as needlessly protracting their loved ones' suffering and warned that the plan to conquer Gaza City endangered the hostages.

### **Rubio blames impasse in talks on Macron's Palestine recognition**

**Rubio said ceasefire-hostage talks with Hamas broke down the day** French President Emmanuel Macron [announced](#) plans to recognize Palestinian statehood, which the top US diplomat said emboldened the terror group.

**"Talks with Hamas fell apart on the day Macron made the unilateral decision that he's going to recognize the Palestinian state,"** said Rubio in an [interview](#) broadcast Friday with the Catholic Eternal Word Television Network. "And then you have other people come forward, other countries say, 'well, if there is not a ceasefire by September, we're going to recognize a Palestinian state.' If I'm Hamas, I'd basically conclude, let's not do a ceasefire... because we can be rewarded, we can claim it as a victory."

Macron announced on July 25 that France would recognize a Palestinian state at the UN General Assembly in September, triggering a wave of similar declarations by other countries, including Britain and Canada.



*US Secretary of State Marco Rubio (R) listens as US President Donald Trump addresses a press conference during a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Heads of State and Government summit in The Hague on June 25, 2025. (NICOLAS TUCAT / AFP)*

**Also on July 25, Israel and the US recalled their negotiators from truce-hostage talks in Doha after receiving what they deemed an unsatisfactory response from Hamas to a proposal for a partial truce-hostage deal. The talks have since stalled.**

Despite **Rubio's claim, the negotiations fell apart hours before Macron's announcement, with Hamas giving its last response to the mediators over**

**a day beforehand.**

"So those messages, while largely symbolic in their minds, actually have made it harder to get peace and harder to achieve a deal with Hamas. They feel emboldened," Rubio said, adding that he agrees with Netanyahu's accusation that recognition of a Palestinian state rewards the terror group for the Hamas onslaught of October 7, 2023, which sparked the war in Gaza.

**Rubio also rejected as a fiction the country being recognized by France and the other nations: "What these people talk about isn't real. They can't define the borders or who's going to run it... And if it's going to be run by Hamas, you're going to be right back into war."**

**"As long as Hamas exists... there will never be peace in Gaza," Rubio said.** "Their reason for existing is that they want to destroy Israel. They want to drive every Jew out of the Middle East."





French President Emmanuel Macron arrives for talks with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz (not in picture) at Villa Borsig, the guesthouse of the German Foreign Ministry, in Berlin, Germany, July 23, 2025. (RALF HIRSCHBERGER / AFP)

**“Ultimately, what Israel needs to do for Israel’s security will be determined by Israel,”** he said, when asked about Israel’s plan to take over Gaza City.

Separately, US President Donald Trump was asked by the press at the White House on Friday about [reports](#) that Somaliland, a breakaway coastal enclave in Somalia, had expressed an interest in taking in

Gazans if he recognized Somaliland’s independence.

“We’re looking into that right now. Good question, actually, and another complex one, but we’re working on that right now,” Trump responded, avoiding a direct answer.

Agencies and Jacob Magid contributed to this report. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/witkoff-said-set-to-meet-qatar-pm-on-comprehensive-deal-amid-scramble-to-stop-gaza-takeover/>

## IDF chief: Army will carry out Gaza City occupation plan in ‘best possible way’

**At least 17 said dead as a result of bombing, starvation or being hit by airdropped aid across Strip; Egypt, Qatar working on comprehensive truce-hostage deal, officials say**

By [Emanuel Fabian](#), [Nurit Yohanan](#), [Tol Staff](#) and [Agencies](#) 8 August 2025, 9:28 pm



Footage shows before and after images of areas in the Gaza Strip, from 2023 and 2025. The new videos were taken by the Guardian’s international correspondent, Lorenzo Tondo, on a Jordanian plane delivering aid, and released on August 5, 2025. (Guardian News And Media, via Reuters)

**The IDF chief on Friday vowed to carry out “in the best possible way” Israel’s decision to conquer Gaza City, as Palestinian media and Gaza’s Hamas-run health ministry reported at least 17 killed in the past day by Israeli bombing, starvation and being hit by airdropped aid packages.**

**At the same time, Arab mediators were said to be working on a deal to release all 50 remaining hostages from Gaza in one fell swoop in exchange for an end to the war and full Israeli withdrawal from the Strip after talks for a partial deal hit an impasse last month.**



The security cabinet earlier Friday voted to approve a proposal from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to conquer Gaza City. The decision sparked fierce criticism at home and abroad over concerns that it would deepen the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and endanger the hostages.

The plan has also faced criticism from the government’s far-right, which says it does not go far enough.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir (left) and Southern Command chief Maj. Gen. Yaniv Asor are seen during an

*assessment at an army base in southern Israel, August 8, 2025. (Israel Defense Forces)*

Meanwhile, in Gaza on Friday, the Strip's Hamas-run health ministry said four people, including children, had died as a result of starvation over the past 24 hours, bringing the toll of starvation-related deaths in the war to 201. The figure could not immediately be verified.

**Khan Younis's Nasser Hospital reported that one child was also killed by an airdropped aid package in Khan Younis. The circumstances were not immediately clear.**

**Media outlets in Gaza reported Friday that six people, most of them children, were injured when an aid package was airdropped into Gaza City and landed on a balcony, which collapsed onto the crowd beneath it.**

Three people were also reportedly killed and several others injured by IDF gunfire while waiting for aid distribution in the Netzarim Corridor in central Gaza.

It was unclear if the distribution site in question belonged to the US- and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, near whose sites there have been near-daily reports of aid seekers killed by Israel.

WAFA, the Palestinian Authority's official news agency, also reported five people killed in an Israeli bombing of Deir al-Balah, in Gaza's center, and cited medical sources in the Hamas-run Strip as saying two people each were killed in further bombings in Khan Younis and Gaza City.

The IDF did not immediately comment on any of the reported bombings or fatal airdrops of aid.

Meeting with division heads and top generals at the Southern Command on Friday morning, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, who warned the cabinet against the expanded fighting, said, "We will continue to lead from the national responsibility placed on the IDF and its commanders," according to comments provided by the military.

"We are responsible for the army's readiness, the security of the state and its citizens, the return of the hostages, and the defeat of Hamas, and so we shall do," said Zamir, according to an IDF statement. "My responsibility is to provide you and the soldiers in particular with as much certainty as possible, to create pauses and a proper endurance. It is in light of this responsibility that we operate."

**Zamir said the IDF is "working on the new plan.** We will deepen the planning, prepare at the highest level in all its aspects, and as always, we will carry out the mission in the best possible way."



*Illustrative: IDF soldiers are seen in the Gaza Strip in a handout photo released July 28, 2025. (Israel Defense Forces)*

**Zamir also stressed in the meeting that "as the war develops, the IDF will act to safeguard the lives of the hostages, allow the forces to refresh in order to strengthen endurance, and operate according to the values and spirit of the IDF."**

"The chief of staff noted that in the coming days the IDF will deepen operational planning with professionalism... with the aim of creating conditions for the return of the hostages and the collapse of the Hamas regime," the military added.

Zamir bitterly opposed the proposal approved early Friday by the security cabinet to expand the war, initially by occupying Gaza City, warning that it would endanger the lives of the hostages and would involve "sending IDF soldiers into a death trap," according to multiple Hebrew media reports.

The comments came as troops in Gaza on Friday continued razing what the army said was terror infrastructure and killing gunmen, and as six European and Arab nations airdropped packages of humanitarian supplies into the Strip as part of Israel's recently adopted aid policy, according to the military.

**The IDF Artillery Corps' elite Sky Riders Unit, together with troops of the 401st Armored Brigade, destroyed a primed rocket launcher in northern Gaza on Thursday,** after it was used to fire a rocket at Nir Am, the military said, adding that the launcher had been primed to fire several more rockets at Israel before it was destroyed.

Elsewhere **in Gaza, the IDF said troops of the 36th Division are continuing to operate in Khan Younis, in the south of the enclave, where they "destroyed underground infrastructure** and eliminated



terror cells that posed a threat to the forces.”

**Additional forces in southern Gaza located and destroyed several tunnel shafts in the past 24 hours, the IDF added.**

At the same time, it **said the 282nd Artillery Regiment destroyed a weapons depot, and the 990th Reserve Artillery Regiment hit buildings that posed a threat to troops in the Shejaiya and Zeitoun neighborhoods of Gaza City.**

The military also said Friday that it **confirmed having killed the deputy commander of Hamas’s Beit Hanoun Battalion during operations in the town in the northern Gaza Strip** over the past month.

The deputy commander, Murad Abu Jarad, served as the de facto commander of the Beit Hanoun Battalion during most of 2024, the military said, adding that he was involved in numerous attacks on troops and that he had participated in the Hamas onslaught of October 7, 2023, which sparked the war in Gaza.

In a separate operation, the **military said it killed the head of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s anti-tank missile unit in the terror group’s Gaza City brigade, Mohammed Dardawasi, who also participated in the October 7 onslaught. In another strike, the IDF said it killed several Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives who were involved in rocket fire and sniper attacks.**

In addition to the fighting, aircraft from the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Germany, Belgium, France, and — for the first time — the Netherlands airdropped 72 pallets of humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip today, the IDF said. Each pallet contains around one ton of food.

Since **July 26, when Israel adopted a new policy to let more aid into the Strip, over 1,000 humanitarian aid packages have been airdropped in the Gaza Strip by 10 countries**, including Israel, according to the military. The packages the IDF airdropped were supplied by international aid groups.

Israel re-adopted the policy amid mounting international criticism over the hunger crisis in Gaza. But airdrops are only able to deliver a small fraction of what can come into Gaza by land. They also pose safety risks for the civilians who can be hit by the packages from above.

Israel has denied using starvation as a weapon of war in Gaza and blamed the crisis on Hamas diverting aid and the United Nations’ failure to properly distribute assistance. The UN has retorted that the war’s conditions and Israeli restrictions have made upholding a functioning humanitarian operation all but impossible.

**Comprehensive truce-hostage deal said to be in the works**

**Mediators from Egypt and Qatar are working on a new framework which would include the release of all hostages — dead and alive** — in one go in return for an end of the war in Gaza and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the strip, according to two Arab officials speaking to The Associated Press anonymously due to the sensitivity of the discussions.

One is involved directly in the deliberations, and the second was briefed on the efforts.

The **efforts have the backing of major Arab Gulf monarchies**, the officials said, as they are concerned about further regional destabilization if Israel’s government proceeds with a full reoccupation of Gaza, two decades after its unilateral withdrawal from the Strip.



*Displaced Palestinians carry food parcels and supplies from a Gaza Humanitarian Foundation aid distribution point along the Netzarim Corridor in the central Gaza Strip, August 4, 2025. (Ali Hassan/Flash90)*

**The yet-to-be finalized framework aims to address the contentious issue of what to do with Hamas’s weapons, with Israel seeking full disarmament and Hamas refusing.** The official directly involved in the efforts said discussions were underway about “freezing arms,” which may involve Hamas retaining but not using its weapons. The official also called for the group to relinquish power in the strip.

A Palestinian-Arab committee would run Gaza and oversee the reconstruction efforts until the establishment of a Palestinian administration with a new police force, trained by two US allies in the Middle East, to take over the strip, said the source. It was unclear what role the Western-backed Palestinian Authority would

play. The Israeli cabinet decision on Friday specifically ruled out a role for the PA in Gaza's post-war governance.

The second official said a powerful Gulf country is supporting the Egyptian-Qatari efforts.

A senior Hamas official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to brief the media, said the group's leadership is aware of the Arab mediators' efforts to revive the ceasefire talks, but has yet to receive details.

AP reached out to the governments in Qatar, Egypt and Israel for comment but did not hear back.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-chief-army-will-carry-out-gaza-city-occupation-plan-in-best-possible-way/>

## Smotrich: 'I lost trust that Netanyahu wants, is able to win Gaza war'

*He called on the prime minister to reconvene the cabinet and announce that there will be no more pauses in the war, and no more partial deals.*

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) AUGUST 9, 2025 21:56 Updated: AUGUST 9, 2025 22:31



Prime Min By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) AUGUST 9, 2025 21:56 Updated: AUGUST 9, 2025 22:31  
ister Benjamin Netanyahu and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich seen at the Knesset, in Jerusalem, February 7, 2024 (photo credit: YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90)

**Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said in a lengthy statement on Saturday night that following the Security Cabinet meeting on Friday, he has lost confidence that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seeks to lead the IDF to victory.**

**He called on the prime minister to reconvene the cabinet and announce that there will be no more pauses**

**in the war, and no more partial deals.**

**"This time we proceed with a clear, sharp move toward a decisive outcome and victory** - ending with Hamas's complete surrender and the [return of all the hostages at once](#), or with its defeat and total destruction. Annex large parts of the Gaza Strip and open its gates to voluntary emigration," Smotrich said, arguing that this is the only way Israel will completely win the war.

"The prime minister and the cabinet succumbed to weaknesses, let emotion defeat reason, and once again chose more of the same: to launch a military move whose purpose is not a decisive outcome, but only to pressure Hamas into a partial hostage deal, stating clearly that if [Hamas](#) agrees to a deal, we too will agree to stop again, withdraw again, and allow it to recover and rearm again. And so on and so forth," according to the finance minister.

*Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich attends a Plenum session of the Knesset, Israel's Parliament, also attended by Argentine President Javier Milei (not pictured), in Jerusalem, June 11, 2025. (credit: REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun)*

### The cost of war

**He said that sending tens of thousands of soldiers to risk their lives to operate in Gaza City, and "to pay heavy political and international costs solely to pressure Hamas to release hostages and then to retreat" is immoral and illogical.**

Until this time, "for the sake of unity, I stood behind moves that in my view were less correct. I remained in the government despite terrible decisions such as releasing terrorist murderers with blood on their hands and painful withdrawals from areas captured at great cost - so long as I assessed we were striving for a decisive outcome and victory."

"A war should be fought to win, to the end - even if it carries heavy costs. But a partial move meant only to push Hamas back into the negotiating room, in national humiliation and capitulation to terror - absolutely not," Smotrich continued.

Smotrich claimed that whenever there is a push for a deal on the table, the military does not operate at full force. What is worse of all, he said, is that if the state continues to allow Hamas the option of a temporary pause for the release of hostages, whenever it feels it is on the verge of collapse, it will ask for a "breather" and agree to a temporary deal.

"Then the war will again be halted, the fighters will again pull back, and their efforts and sacrifices will be squandered. And so it repeats, without a decisive outcome," he said, arguing that these partial deals create a cycle of conflict. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/politics-and-diplomacy/article-863733>

## Rabbi and family safely escape fire that destroys historic New Jersey synagogue

**Mayor says no indications blaze at Congregation Beth El Chabad was intentionally set; Rabbi Yitzchok Lerman, his wife and kids were sleeping in apartment inside synagogue**

By [Grace Gilson](#) 8 August 2025, 11:57 pm



*Rabbi Yitzchok Lerman, who survived with his family in the fire that completely destroyed Congregation Beth El synagogue, stands in front of the synagogue's ruins in Rutherford, New Jersey on August 8. (Kyle Mazza/Anadolu via Getty Images via JTA)*

**JTA — A fire early Friday morning destroyed a historic synagogue and Jewish community center in Rutherford, New Jersey, as the congregation's rabbi and his family escaped unharmed.**

The **four-alarm fire broke out at approximately 2:45 a.m. at Congregation Beth El Chabad**. Rabbi Yitzchok Lerman, his wife, and four of their children were sleeping in an apartment

inside the synagogue.

**Rutherford Mayor Frank Nunziato stated that there are no indications that the blaze was intentionally set.**

Officers near the congregation responded to the scene, where they found that the entire south side of the building was engulfed in flames, according to Rutherford Police Department Chief John Russo.

**Lerman and his family were able to escape the building unharmed**, after which the fire spread throughout the rest of the building, which was deemed a “complete loss,” according to Russo.

“We saw orange flames outside our window so we quickly grabbed our children and ran out,” Lerman told The New York Times. “I turned around to save our Torah scrolls, but the flames had already engulfed the entire building. It was that quick.”

Lerman told The Times that he hoped to work with firefighters to search for the Torahs' remains, which will then be buried by the congregation. (Burial is the traditional way to dispose of Torahs that can no longer be used.) He has also launched a crowdfunding campaign to support rebuilding.

The **synagogue was founded in 1919. It suffered a Molotov cocktail attack in January 2012 that injured the rabbi living in the building at the time.**

“Congregation Beth El has been a pillar of the Rutherford Community for decades and our hearts go out to them,” said Russo in a statement.

**Due to the extensive and severe damage to the synagogue, an initial investigation into the cause of the fire was found to be “undetermined and not criminal,”** according to Russo.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/rabbi-and-family-safely-escape-fire-that-destroys-historic-new-jersey-synagogue/>

## US airline serves kosher meal labeled 'Zionazi' to passenger

**JetBlue meal carrying anti-Israeli message prompts outrage from Jewish groups and airlines; case comes after similar one in Spain**

[Iris Lifshitz-Klieger](#) 13:40

**Outrage erupted online after StopAntisemitism, a U.S.-based organization combating antisemitism, shared a photo on X of a kosher meal served on a JetBlue flight labeled with the word “zionazi.” The group condemned the incident, saying, “StopAntisemitism is sickened to see a JetBlue passenger receive his kosher meal with ‘zionazi’ written on it.”**

“Whomever is responsible for this must be immediately fired - **this is 1941 and Jews will NOT put up with this hate,**” it added. Details about the flight or the timing remain unclear. Ynet reached out to StopAntisemitism and JetBlue for further information, but the airline has yet to respond.





StopAntisemitism @StopAntisemites · 23h

StopAntisemitism is sickened to see a @JetBlue passenger receive his kosher meal with "zionazi" written on it.

Whoever is responsible for this must be immediately fired - this is 1941 and Jews will NOT put up with this hate.



Anti-Israeli message on Iberia Airlines flight  
(Photo: X / @DAIAArgentina)

"The flight manager personally apologized on behalf of Iberia. We are conducting a thorough investigation, both internally and with our catering suppliers, to understand what happened and take appropriate measures." Iberia firmly rejected all forms of discrimination and hate, emphasizing that such behavior contradicts the company's core values of respect and inclusion.

These incidents have heightened concerns about rising antisemitism, particularly in the context of air travel, prompting calls for accountability and stronger measures to protect passengers from targeted harassment.

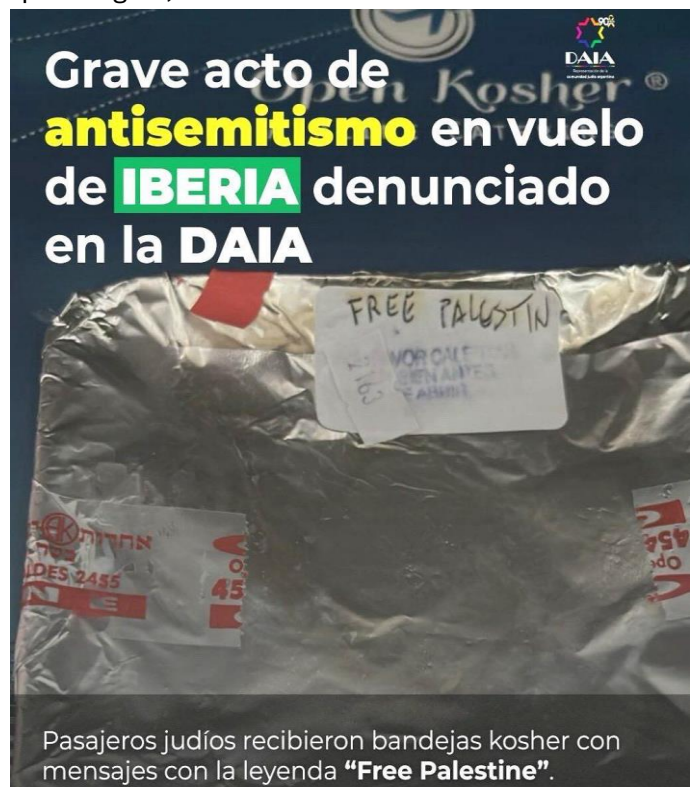
<https://www.ynetnews.com/travel/article/sjmm5wh00ee>

The meal served to BlueJet passenger (Photo: StopAntisemites / X@)

A similar incident took place days earlier on an Iberia Airlines flight from Buenos Aires to Madrid, where a Jewish passenger discovered "Free Palestine" written on their kosher meal tray. Other Jewish passengers on the same flight reported trays marked with the initials "FP".

The Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations (DAIA), which fights antisemitism in Argentina, exposed the incident on X, sharing a photo of the defaced tray. "DAIA condemns this discriminatory act and has demanded explanations and immediate action from aviation authorities," the organization said.

Iberia responded to Ynet's inquiry, acknowledging that several passengers who ordered kosher meals reported handwritten pro-Palestinian messages on their trays. "Our crew documented the incident and assisted affected passengers," the airline said.



**At least 365 protesters arrested in London for backing banned Palestine Action group**  
*Police says anyone 'expressing support' for group 'arrested or in the process of being arrested'; 'Let them arrest us all,' says one attendee. 'This government has gone too far'*





*Police officers remonstrate with a protester during a "Lift The Ban" demonstration in support of the proscribed group Palestine Action, calling for the recently imposed ban to be lifted, in Parliament Square, central London, on August 9, 2025. (HENRY NICHOLLS / AFP)*

**LONDON —** Police in London arrested at least 365 people for supporting Palestine Action on Saturday at the latest and largest protest backing the group since the government banned it last month under anti-terror laws.

The UK capital's Metropolitan Police said it expected to make further arrests at the

demonstration in Parliament Square, as organizers claimed only a "fraction" of the hundreds who turned out had been detained.

"That claim simply isn't true," the Met said in a statement, noting some of the people there were onlookers or not visibly supporting Palestine Action.

"We are confident that anyone who came to Parliament Square today to hold a placard expressing support for Palestine Action was either arrested or is in the process of being arrested," it added.

Attendees, bearing signs saying "Oppose genocide, support Palestine Action" and other slogans, applauded those



being arrested and shouted "Shame on you" at officers.

"Let them arrest us all," Richard Bull, 42, a wheelchair user in attendance, told AFP. "This government has gone too far. I have nothing to feel ashamed of."

*A demonstrator holds a placard during a protest in support of Palestine Action, in Parliament Square, in London, August 9, 2025. (AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali)*

**A group called Defend Our Juries organized the event as part of what it called an escalation in its "lift the ban" campaign seeking to reverse the government's**

**decision.**

"Once the meaning of 'terrorism' is separated from campaigns of violence against a civilian population, and extended to include those causing economic damage or embarrassment to the rich, the powerful and the criminal, then the right to freedom of expression has no meaning and democracy is dead," the group said on its website.

**It said in a press release that it suspected police had been interfering in its attempts to organize opposition to Palestine Action's ban, noting a web-hosting company shut down its website earlier this week.**

London's Met Police and other UK forces have made scores of similar arrests on previous weekends since the government outlawed Palestine Action on July 5.



*A protester is carried away by police officers at a “Lift The Ban” demonstration in support of the proscribed group Palestine Action, calling for the recently imposed ban to be lifted, in Parliament Square, central London, on August 9, 2025. (HENRY NICHOLLS / AFP)*

**Anyone expressing support for a proscribed group risks arrest under UK anti-terror laws.** Police announced this week that the first three people had been charged in the English and Welsh criminal justice system with supporting Palestine Action following their arrests at a July 5 demo.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper moved to ban Palestine Action after activists [broke into](#) a British air force base in southern England on June 20 to protest British military support for Israel’s war with Hamas. The activists sprayed red paint into the engines of two tanker planes at the RAF Brize Norton base in Oxfordshire and caused further damage with crowbars.

**Palestine Action had previously targeted Israeli defense contractors and other sites in Britain that they believe have links with the Israeli military.**

The interior ministry noted ahead of Saturday’s protests that its members were also suspected of other “serious attacks” that involved “violence, significant injuries and extensive criminal damage.”



*Police officers arrest a demonstrator during a protest in support of Palestine Action, in Parliament Square, in London, August 9, 2025. (AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali)*

**Critics of the ban, including NGOs like Amnesty International and Greenpeace, have lambasted the move as legal overreach and a threat to free speech.**

Amnesty International UK Chief Executive Sacha Deshmukh wrote to Met Police chief Mark Rowley this week urging restraint be exercised when policing people holding placards expressing support for Palestine Action.

The NGO has argued arrests of such people are in

breach of international human rights law.

A UK court challenge against the decision to proscribe Palestine Action as a terror organization will be heard later this year. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/at-least-365-protesters-arrested-in-london-for-backing-banned-palestine-action-group/>



## Surviving Iranian nuclear scientists sent into hiding after Israeli strikes — report

*At least 15 top researchers moved to secure locations, The Telegraph reports, amid calls to improve protection after Israeli assassinations that opened June war*

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 9:03 pm

*Vehicles drive past a banner showing portraits of the Iranian armed forces commanders and nuclear scientists who were killed in Israeli strikes, at Tajrish Square in northern Tehran, Iran, June 30, 2025. (AP/Vahid Salemi)*



**sent into hiding after dozens were killed by Israel during its 12-day offensive against Tehran's nuclear and ballistic-missile programs in June, [The Telegraph](#) reported on Saturday.**

**The British daily said that over 15 of the surviving researchers, among 100 on an Israeli list, are no longer living in their homes or lecturing at universities amid fears of renewed Israeli strikes.** It cited a senior Iranian official.

The scientists have been moved to secure villas in Tehran and along the country's northern coast with their families, while those teaching at universities were "replaced with people who have no connection with the nuclear program," the official said.

The move came after Iran executed a man on Wednesday convicted of spying for Israel by passing on information about a nuclear scientist killed during the war with Israel, the judiciary said.

Israeli experts cited by The Telegraph said that researchers ready to take over the work of assassinated scientists were "dead men walking" despite the increased security provided to them.

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They added that some of the surviving scientists have already replaced their dead colleagues at Iran's nuclear weaponization program at the Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research, known by its Persian acronym, SPND, including scientists with expertise in explosives, neutron physics, and warhead design.

"They saw what happened to their colleagues, and as we learned from 2010 when we eliminated the other scientists, it's not changing their way of thinking in terms of their willingness to support the regime," said Danny Citrinowicz, the former head of the Iranian strategic desk in the IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate.

"Those who are left will be at the forefront of any Iranian attempt to reach a nuclear bomb, hence they will automatically become targets for Israel, as Israel has shown in the past. I have no doubt about it. Any scientist who deals with the nuclear issue will be eliminated or will be threatened with elimination," he continued.

*Mourners gather around trucks bearing the flag-draped coffins of the Iranian armed forces generals, nuclear scientists, and their family members who were killed in Israeli strikes, during their funeral ceremony in Tehran, Iran, June 28, 2025. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)*

**Iran has reportedly overhauled its security protocols for nuclear scientists after Israel killed more than 30 senior security officials and 11 senior nuclear scientists in June.**

**The assassination campaign spurred domestic calls for tighter protection of**



**surviving scientists and their families, as well as for Iran to abandon its stated restraint and openly pursue a nuclear weapon.**

Previously, protection of scientists had been the sole responsibility of a single Revolutionary Guards unit, but distrust has led to the involvement of multiple agencies, according to an Iranian official.

“They were all asked if they still trust their bodyguards – some said no and were provided with new ones,” he said to The Telegraph.

Israel killed senior military commanders, nuclear scientists, and hundreds of others, striking both military sites and residential areas in mid-June, after launching an unprecedented bombing campaign against Iran, triggering a war during which Iran responded with missile and drone strikes.

Israel said its large-scale assault on the country’s top military leaders, nuclear scientists, uranium enrichment sites, and ballistic missile program was necessary to prevent the Islamic Republic from realizing its plan to destroy the Jewish state.

Iran responded to the attacks by firing hundreds of missiles at Israeli cities, which killed 29 people and injured over 3,000. It has faced continuing internal instability since the war ended and has launched a sweeping internal crackdown aimed at rooting out Israeli spies, dissidents, and opposition figures.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/surviving-iranian-nuclear-scientists-sent-into-hiding-after-israeli-strikes-report/>

## **Iran says it arrested 20 alleged Israeli spies, ‘will make an example of them all’** **‘The judiciary will show no leniency toward spies and agents of the Zionist regime,’ Tehran’s judiciary spokesperson says, as regime continues sweep of alleged collaborators**

By [Reuters](#) Today, 5:49 pm



*Illustrative: An anti-Israel cartoon mocking Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is displayed at Palestine Square in central Tehran on July, 13, 2025. (ATTA KENARE / AFP)*

**Iran has arrested 20 people it alleges are operatives of Israel’s Mossad spy agency in recent months, Tehran’s judiciary said on Saturday, warning that they will face no leniency and will be made an example of.**

**On Wednesday, Iran executed a nuclear scientist named Rouzbeh Vadi, who was convicted of spying for Israel and passing along information on another nuclear scientist killed in Israel’s air strikes on Iran in June, state media reported.**

Judiciary **spokesperson Asghar Jahangiri told reporters in Tehran on Saturday that charges against some of the 20 suspects had been dropped and they were released. He did not give a number.**

“The judiciary will show no leniency toward spies and agents of the Zionist regime, and with firm rulings,

will make an example of them all,” Jahangiri was quoted as saying by Iranian media.

He said full details would be made public once investigations were complete.

**Executions of Iranians convicted of spying for Israel have significantly increased this year, with at least eight death sentences carried out in recent months.**

*Illustrative: Motorists drive their vehicles past a billboard depicting Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in the center of Tehran’s Valiasr Square, on July 13, 2025. (ATTA KENARE / AFP)*





In mid-June, Israel launched an unprecedented bombing campaign against Iran, triggering a war during which Iran responded with missile and drone strikes.

The Israeli offensive killed senior military commanders, nuclear scientists and hundreds of others, striking both military sites and residential areas.

Israel said its sweeping assault on the country's top military leaders, nuclear scientists, uranium enrichment sites, and ballistic missile program was necessary to prevent the Islamic Republic from obtaining a nuclear weapon and realizing its avowed plan to destroy the Jewish state.



*A woman walks past a residential building that was hit in an Israeli strike covered with a big Iranian flag, in Tehran on June 25, 2025. (ATTA KENARE / AFP)*

Since the war, Iranian authorities have **announced multiple arrests of people accused of spying for Israel and the executions of several convicted of working with Mossad. Israel does not comment on such claims.**

Israeli authorities themselves have boasted about the deep penetration into Iran that their intelligence agencies achieved to plan for its attack, including footage purporting to show agents launching drones from within Iran.

**Iran is the world's second-most prolific executioner after China**, according to human rights groups. It rarely publicly produces evidence of the crimes those executed have been convicted of.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-says-it-arrested-20-alleged-israeli-spies-will-make-an-example-of-them-all/>

## **Six Lebanese soldiers killed in blast while seizing Hezbollah munitions**

*Incident in south Lebanon comes days after Lebanon approves US-backed plan to strip terror group of its weapons and secure Israeli troop withdrawal from the south*

*By [AFP](#) and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 5:49 pm*



*Supporters of Lebanon's Hezbollah terror group block the streets with burning tires as they rally in cars and motorbikes to protest the government's endorsement of a plan to disarm it, in Beirut's southern suburbs, early on August 8, 2025. (Ibrahim AMRO / AFP)*

**BEIRUT, Lebanon — The Lebanese army said a blast at a weapons depot near the Israeli border killed six soldiers on Saturday, with a military source saying the troops were removing munitions from a Hezbollah facility.**

**Under the truce that ended last year's war between Israel and Hezbollah, Lebanese troops have been deploying in the country's south and dismantling the**

**Iran-backed terror group's infrastructure in the region.**

The **deaths come after the Lebanese government decided this week to disarm Hezbollah and tasked the army with drawing up a plan to complete the process by year's end.**

soldiers on Saturday, with a military source saying the troops were removing munitions from a Hezbollah facility.

**Hezbollah has said it will ignore the cabinet's decision**, which came under heavy US pressure, while the group's backer Iran said Saturday it opposed the effort.

A military statement gave a preliminary toll of six soldiers killed "while an army unit was inspecting a weapons depot and dismantling its contents in Wadi Zibqin," in Tyre district near the Israeli border.

**Investigations were underway to determine the cause of the blast, it added.**

A military source, requesting anonymity as they were not authorised to brief the media, told AFP the blast took place "inside a Hezbollah military facility." Troops were "removing munitions and unexploded ordnance left over from the recent war" when the blast occurred, the source added.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said he spoke to army commander Rodolphe Haykal about a “painful incident” that led to a number of dead and wounded from the army as a result of a munitions explosion as an engineering unit “was working to remove and disable” the ordnance, a presidency statement said.

Prime Minister Nawaf Salam paid tribute on X to the troops who were killed “while performing their national duty.”

### **The announcement came after Andrea Tenenti, spokesperson for UN peacekeepers in Lebanon, said Thursday that troops had “discovered a vast network of fortified tunnels” in the same area.**

UN spokesman Farhan Haq had told **reporters that peacekeepers and Lebanese troops found “three bunkers, artillery, rocket launchers, hundreds of explosive shells and rockets, anti-tank mines and about 250 ready-to-use improvised explosive devices.”**

It came after the Lebanese government on Thursday voted to approve a US proposal that would ultimately lead to disarming the Hezbollah terror group, after tasking the army earlier in the week with drawing up a plan to establish a state monopoly on arms by the end of the year, a challenge to Hezbollah.

The decision to disarm the group prompted Hezbollah ministers and Muslim Shi’ite allies to walk out of the cabinet’s discussion on the plan, three Lebanese political sources told Reuters.

Submitted by US President Donald Trump’s envoy to the region, Tom Barrack, the plan sets out the most detailed steps yet for disarming the Iran-backed group, which has rejected mounting calls to disarm since last year’s devastating war with Israel.

In addition to disarming Hezbollah, the US proposal would also lead to ending Israel’s military operations in the country and the withdrawal of its troops from five positions in southern Lebanon.

A senior adviser to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Saturday that Tehran “is certainly opposed to the disarmament of Hezbollah.”

“Iran has always supported the people and the resistance of Lebanon and continues to do so,” international affairs adviser Ali Akbar Velayati told Iran’s Tasnim news agency.

Lebanon’s foreign ministry slammed the comments as “flagrant and unacceptable interference,” reminding “the leadership in Tehran that Iran would be better served by focusing on the issues of its own people.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/five-lebanese-soldiers-killed-in-blast-while-seizing-hezbollah-munitions/>

## **Zelensky risks angering Trump – NYT**

*The Ukrainian leader has rejected the US president’s suggestion that Kiev and Moscow may have to “swap territories” to achieve peace*

9 Aug, 2025 17:33



Vladimir Zelensky. © Antonio Masiello/Getty Images

**Ukraine’s Vladimir Zelensky could find himself on the wrong side of the US president after he publicly criticized Donald Trump’s remark about the potential need for Kiev and Moscow to swap territories in order to end the Ukraine conflict, the New York Times has claimed.**

Trump will be meeting with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in Alaska next Friday in a bid to find a way out of the conflict.

Russia insists that the Lugansk People’s Republic, the Donetsk People’s Republic, Zaporozhye and Kherson regions all became part of its territory following referendums held in 2022. However, Moscow currently controls only the former in its entirety, with active hostilities continuing in the neighboring DPR. Russian forces have so far secured only part of the other two regions. Additionally, the Russian military is in control of patches of land along the border in the Ukrainian regions of Kharkov and Sumy.

In an article on Saturday, the NYT conjectured that Zelensky’s “*blunt rejection*” of Trump’s suggestion “*risks angering Mr. Trump,*” who the newspaper noted previously criticized Kiev for being “*not ready for peace.*”

In his regular video address on Saturday, Zelensky stressed that Ukraine’s borders are enshrined in its constitution and that “*nobody can or will*” make concessions on the issue. “*The Ukrainians will not give their land*



to the occupiers,” he insisted.

Earlier this week Zelensky acknowledged, however, that Ukraine is not in a position to forcibly retake Russian territories it claims.

On Friday, President Trump said that a peace agreement between the two belligerents would likely involve “some swapping of territories to the betterment of both” sides, but stopped short of providing any specifics.

Following a meeting between President Putin and Trump’s special envoy, Steve Witkoff, in Moscow on Wednesday, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov told reporters that Washington had made an “acceptable” offer to Moscow, but declined to go into further detail.

Moscow has long accused Zelensky of denying reality and unnecessarily prolonging a conflict he cannot win.

<https://www.rt.com/news/622708-nyt-zelensky-risks-angering-trump-territory-swap/>

## Zelensky trashes Trump’s peace terms

***The Ukrainian leader said Kiev will not accept any agreement with Moscow that includes territorial concessions***

9 Aug, 2025 09:36



*Ukraine’s Vladimir Zelensky, Rome, Italy, July 10, 2025. © Michael Kappeler / picture alliance via Getty Images*

**Vladimir Zelensky has rejected US President Donald Trump’s call for territorial concessions to Russia, claiming no such agreement would be accepted by the Ukrainian people.**

**Trump’s special envoy Steve Witkoff visited Moscow this week and reportedly made significant progress toward a compromise aimed at ending the conflict between Russia**

**and Ukraine.**

The US president [said](#) the proposal includes “some swapping of territories to the betterment of both” sides and that Zelensky would need to find a way to approve such a deal under Ukrainian law.

In his regular video address on Saturday, Zelensky stressed that Ukraine’s borders are defined by its constitution and that “*nobody can or will*” make concessions on the issue. “*The Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupiers,*” he proclaimed.

Zelensky added that Ukrainians will only respect a “*real, living peace,*” warning that “*any decision taken against us and without us, without Ukraine, would be a decision against peace.*”

Earlier this week, Zelensky acknowledged that Ukraine is not in a position to forcibly retake Russian territories claimed by Kiev.

The Ukrainian military relies heavily on Western weapons, funding and intelligence. The government is counting on sustained long-term support.

Russian officials have repeatedly accused Zelensky of denying reality and prolonging a conflict he cannot win. Moscow says it intends to achieve its core national security objectives, preferably through diplomacy.

The Ukrainian Constitution, which Zelensky cited, also requires a president to hand power to either a newly elected successor or the parliament speaker when their term ends. Zelensky did neither when his term expired last year, retaining power under martial law.

Last month, Zelensky clashed with Ukraine’s foreign backers after his administration pushed through legislation eliminating the independence of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau, created in 2015 under Western pressure. However, he quickly reversed the measure after aid donors threatened to suspend assistance.

<https://www.rt.com/russia/622699-zelensky-trump-peace-deal/>

## Risk of sabotage of Putin-Trump summit is real – senior Russian negotiator

***“Titanic” provocation and disinformation efforts are incoming, Kirill Dmitriev has warned***

9 Aug, 2025 12:54



Russian presidential adviser Kirill Dmitriev. © Sputnik / Grigory Sysoev

**Countries with a vested interest in prolonging the Ukraine conflict will likely go to great lengths to derail the planned meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his American counterpart Donald Trump, Moscow's senior negotiator Kirill Dmitriev warned on Saturday.**

The two leaders are set to meet next Friday in Alaska, with a possible resolution of the armed conflict between Kiev and Moscow at the top of the agenda. Ukraine's Vladimir Zelensky has already rejected any truce that would involve territorial concessions, despite Trump saying they would be part of the proposed deal.

*"Certainly, several nations that have a vested interest in prolonging the conflict will take titanic efforts (provocations and disinformation) to torpedo the planned meeting,"* Dmitriev wrote on social media.

Dmitriev, who serves as Putin's aide for international economic cooperation and heads Moscow's efforts to normalize ties with Washington, was responding to remarks by former US Defense Department adviser Dan Caldwell. Caldwell said there was a *"concerted effort to undermine"* the summit, reacting to a Wall Street Journal article which he noted was based largely on Ukrainian and European sources.

Earlier this week, US media claimed Trump was pressuring Putin to meet with Zelensky before agreeing to a face-to-face meeting with the Russian leader. Trump denied imposing such conditions, saying, *"They would like to meet me, and I'll do whatever I can to stop the killing."* Moscow has called Zelensky's continued claim to the presidency unconstitutional

since his term expired last year. Putin has said he is willing to meet the Ukrainian leader to finalize – but not negotiate – a truce. He also suggested that the question of Zelensky's disputed status needs to be addressed to ensure the legality of any future treaty.

Dmitriev has previously described the upcoming summit as a historic opportunity and praised the venue, noting Alaska's historical ties to Russia before its sale to the United States in the 19th century.

<https://www.rt.com/russia/622702-trump-putin-summit-sabotage/>

## 'A tangible result': Foreign leaders agree: Trump should win Nobel Peace Prize

By Hailey Gomez, Daily Caller News Foundation

August 9, 2025



Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev agreed with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Friday during peace deal talks, saying President Donald Trump should win the Nobel Peace Prize after bringing the two countries together.

**Trump on Friday announced what he said was the end of a three decade long conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over territorial claims. During the peace deal signing, Pashinyan responded to a reporter by saying he believes Trump should not only win a Nobel Peace Prize, but that he would defend and promote his nomination.**

Following Armenia's prime minister, Aliyev proposed a joint appeal between the two leaders to the Nobel Committee to award Trump, asking, "who, if not President Trump?"

"So maybe we agree with Prime Minister Pashinyan to send a joint appeal to the Nobel Committee to award President Trump with the Nobel Peace Prize because from the leaders of the countries which were at war for more than three decades, having this historic signature here, it really means a lot," Aliyev said.

### **WATCH:**

"This is a tangible result of President Trump's leadership, and no one could have achieved that. So who, if



not President Trump, deserves the Nobel Peace Prize?" Aliyev asked.

The peace deal between Pashinyan and Aliyev came after the U.S. reportedly worked for months to bring the two leaders together, with both now set to deepen economic ties with the United States as well.

The proposal for a Nobel Peace Prize nomination from the leaders on Friday follows Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's July [nomination](#) of Trump for the award. On July 7, Netanyahu met with Trump at the White House, thanking him for his leadership as the president has also navigated talks between Israel and the terrorist group Hamas in their ongoing conflict.

Following through on his vow to bring peace, Trump has settled multiple world conflicts since January, including cease-fires between Thailand [and](#) Cambodia, Israel [and](#) Syria, and India [and](#) Pakistan.

<https://www.wnd.com/2025/08/tangible-result-foreign-leaders-agree-trump-should-win/>

## OP ED

# Iran's Regime Is Plotting Its Comeback — Do Not Let It Happen

by [Majid Rafizadeh](#)

August 9, 2025 at 5:00 am



**Iran's regime is built on the belief that it must export its revolutionary Islamist vision, overthrow secular governments, and unify the Muslim world under a single Shiite Islamist state. Its constitution enshrines that vision, and its institutions are structured around advancing this goal.**

*Pictured: Khamenei gives a speech on November 1, 2023, televised on Iran's*

*Channel 1. (Image source: MEMRI)*

The Iranian regime does not think in terms of four-year election cycles or short-term political wins. It thinks in decades and acts on long-term strategic objectives. Its leadership, unelected, is essentially permanent. Iran is ruled by a Supreme Leader, who occupies the office for life, and by a military and clerical elite who are driven not by pragmatism but by an Islamist revolutionary ideology.

Over the past 46 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has become a primary source of instability in the Middle East, a hub of global terrorism, and a headache for Western democracies. The Iranian regime's survival has been the result of relentless ideological focus, brutal repression, and an ability to exploit the weaknesses and short-term thinking of its adversaries.

Recently, the regime suffered a significant blow. Israeli and American strikes hit Iran's nuclear infrastructure and proxy leadership networks with devastating precision. Iran's leadership is bruised and its capabilities degraded, but this circumstance should not lull us into a false sense of security.

The damage, while significant, is not permanent. The West must resist the temptation to see this as the beginning of the end for Iran's radical regime. Rather than force the mullahs into submission, the damage is likely to fuel a desire for revenge. The regime responds to perceived humiliations with long-term, carefully-planned vengeance. This revenge may not come tomorrow or next month — it will be calculated, methodical and likely deadlier than anything seen before, including the murderous October 7, 2023 Hamas invasion of Israel, the downing of civilian airliners, or the murder of hundreds of U.S. soldiers by Iran-backed militias in Lebanon, Syria or Iraq.

To believe that the Iranian regime has learned its lesson is to engage in wishful thinking — just a Western psychological projection that mistakes tactical restraint for ideological reform. Iran's regime is [built on](#) the belief that it must export its revolutionary Islamist vision, overthrow secular governments, and [unify](#) the Muslim world under a single Shiite Islamist state. This project is its purpose. It is what gives the Islamic Republic of Iran its identity. Its constitution [enshrines](#) that vision, and its institutions — from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to its intelligence services — are structured around advancing this goal.

A regime built on these foundations does not abandon its mission when it suffers setbacks. It adapts,

regroups and strikes again when the world is distracted or divided. It is important not misread its current weakness as evidence of defeat. It is more likely a prelude to escalation.

This danger is not limited to the Middle East. It is now [reaching](#) deep into Europe and North America. Recently, the United States, joined by thirteen NATO members and Austria, [issued](#) a joint statement accusing Iran of carrying out a growing number of plots on Western soil. The statement [condemned](#) Iran's intelligence agencies for attempting to kill, kidnap and harass individuals in Europe and North America, in direct violation of national sovereignty. The statement [warned](#) that Iranian operatives are cooperating with transnational criminal organizations to carry out acts of violence and intimidation. The targets are not only Iranian dissidents and exiled political activists, but also journalists, Jewish citizens, and even former and current officials. The goal is clear: to silence critics, spread fear and expand Iran's ability to operate with impunity on foreign soil.

The Iranian regime's growing campaign of terror is a sharp reminder that it does not recognize limits — not national borders, not international law, and not diplomacy. The regime continues to run its embassies and consulates abroad like outposts for intelligence operations. Its diplomats, in many instances, are nothing more than agents [facilitating](#) the regime's foreign operations. Those undoubtedly include tracking and monitoring dissidents, plotting assassinations, and organizing campaigns of propaganda and money-laundering. Western intelligence agencies have already [thwarted](#) countless plots in countries such as France. Each successful disruption, however, is also a signal of the scale of the threat. If even a fraction of these plots were to succeed, the consequences would be devastating. This is no time to become complacent.

In response to the growing threat, under the leadership of President Donald J. Trump, the United States has rightly reimposed and expanded its "maximum pressure" [campaign](#): sweeping new sanctions aimed at crippling the Iran's financial and military capabilities. One of the most significant moves came on July 30, 2025, when the U.S. Treasury [imposed](#) the largest single package of sanctions against Iran since 2018. This round of sanctions [targeted](#) more than 115 vessels, companies and individuals, involved in an elaborate oil-smuggling network [run](#) by Mohammad Hossein Shamkhani, a senior regime insider. That network has [played](#) a key role in exporting oil to China and laundering billions of dollars back to Tehran— funds that are then used to fund the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other terrorists and proxy militias across the region.

The effort to bring Iran's oil exports down to zero must continue with full force. The regime's lifeline is oil; China remains its most important customer. While it may be difficult to get Beijing to cooperate fully, targeted diplomatic and economic pressure on Chinese firms and shipping companies, and especially secondary sanctions on countries that do business with them, can significantly curtail the flow of Iranian crude. The Trump administration [proved](#) during its first term that when sanctions are enforced strictly and secondary sanctions used effectively, even countries such as China will reduce their purchases. What is needed now is the political will to deny Iran access to global energy markets, seize illicit oil shipments, and penalize any country or company that facilitates Iran's oil exports.

Europe, too, has a critical role to play. European countries have long maintained diplomatic and economic relations with Iran, which [uses](#) its embassies as command centers for espionage and terrorism. If Europe is serious about defending its citizens and its sovereignty, it needs finally to take decisive action. This means suspending diplomatic relations, expelling Iranian diplomats, and shutting down all front organizations tied to the Iran. It also means ending trade: it only benefits Iran's military and intelligence sectors.

One of the most important tools for the international community is the United Nations mechanism of "snapback" sanctions. That provision, embedded in the original 2015 "nuclear deal" (JCPOA), allows for the automatic reimposition of all UN sanctions if Iran is found to be in violation of its commitments. This mechanism is set to expire on October 18, 2025, and Iran is racing to outlast the deadline. If snapback sanctions are not reimposed now, Iran will have succeeded in outmaneuvering the international community once again. European powers must act by triggering the mechanism.

Iran is not a normal country acting in pursuit of its people's national interest. It is a fundamentalist theocratic regime committed to conquest. It thrives on conflict. Every dollar that flows into its coffers is a dollar that funds terrorism. Every embassy it maintains abroad is a potential command post for espionage and assassination. Every day the West relaxes its vigilance is a day the Iranian regime uses to regroup and retaliate. That is why the international community must stay united and focused — not just on holding Iran to account for past behavior, but on thwarting its future plots.

Iran must not be allowed to rearm under this regime. It must not be allowed to continue its campaign of terror. This objective means keeping "maximum pressure" in place. It means cutting off Iran's oil exports. It means



denying it access to the global economy. It means shutting down its diplomatic outposts, which serve as centers of espionage. It means reimposing UN sanctions and enforcing them without compromise.

The world cannot afford another mirage of Iranian "reform" or "moderation." Iran is rebuilding its war machine. The mission to stop it must continue, relentlessly and without apology.

**Dr. Majid Rafizadeh, is a political scientist, Harvard-educated analyst, and board member of Harvard International Review. He has authored several books on the US foreign policy. He can be reached at [dr.rafizadeh@post.harvard.edu](mailto:dr.rafizadeh@post.harvard.edu) <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/21821/iran-plotting-comeback>**

## Biblical, Moral, And Strategic: A Party Divided, Especially Over Israel, Cannot Stand

By [Tony Perkins](#)

August 9, 2025



**The political grapevine in Washington has been buzzing with voices from the isolationist wing of the Right — voices eager to distance the United States from Israel. But despite that noise, President Trump has, to his credit, consistently arrived at the right conclusions when it comes to our alliance with the Jewish state in his second term. Now more than ever, the conservative movement must speak with clarity, not confusion.** Republicans cannot afford to fracture over one of the clearest moral and strategic alliances in American foreign policy. A house divided — especially over Israel — cannot stand.

For **most of modern Israel's history, support for the Jewish state has been one of the few truly bipartisan commitments in Washington.** That **began to unravel under President Obama**, whose open disputes with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the so-called two-state solution, the building of Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria, and the 2015 Iran nuclear deal marked a turning point. **As Democrats embraced radical voices like Reps. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), and Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) — who have openly expressed anti-Semitic views — the divide widened. Today, support for Israel is no longer bipartisan. But now, fault lines are also appearing within the GOP.**

Some **Republican lawmakers, like Georgia's Marjorie Taylor Greene, have irresponsibly accused Israel of genocide in Gaza. Conservative influencers like Tucker Carlson have fanned these flames by giving airtime to figures like Darryl Cooper — who questioned the Nazi intent of the Holocaust — without challenge. Yet when Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) cited [Genesis 12:3](#), "I will bless those who bless you," as a rationale for supporting Israel, Carlson aggressively challenged him.**

**Polling helps explain this shift. While 75-80% of Republicans over 30 support military aid (not troops) to Israel, that number drops to about 40% among Gen Z Republicans. Nearly half of MAGA-aligned Gen Zers now view Israel unfavorably.** And the trend is mirrored among Gen Z evangelicals — many of whom have never heard a biblical defense of Israel from the pulpit but have absorbed anti-Israel narratives from schools and social media.

**Supporting Israel's right to exist doesn't require blind agreement with every decision made by its government — just as patriotism doesn't require agreement with every action taken by our own.** Disagreement with policies is natural in any democracy. But standing with Israel means affirming their right to defend themselves and affirming our shared values, history, and worldview. It means recognizing that Israel is not just a strategic ally, but a nation that shares the Judeo-Christian DNA, the principles that shaped America.

**Senator Cruz was right. Genesis 12:3 is more than a verse — it's a promise. Those who bless Israel will be blessed. And from a national security standpoint, as Europe drifts under the weight of Islamic migration and appeasement, Israel remains our most reliable ally in the Middle East.**

**The future of the Republican Party — and the moral clarity of America's leadership — depends on remaining resolute in our support for Israel.** Not out of sentimentality, but because it is right biblically, morally, and strategically.

**Tony Perkins is the president of the [Family Research Council](#) and executive editor of [The Washington Stand](#). He also served two terms as a member of the Louisiana House of Representatives, and served as Chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.**

<https://harbingersdaily.com/biblical-moral-and-strategic-a-party-divided-especially-over-israel-cannot-stand/>



## BS"D

### STEP BY STEP

**FIRST STEP:** Good news is that many friends and supporters of Lev U'Neshama (Heart and Soul) donated towards the Education Fund project to provide basic school supplies for actually 350 children within our Lev U'Neshama families. The school supply part of our effort has been successful. We are grateful.

According to the Israel Population and Statistics office, Tzfat's population is about 40,000, and one third live at the poverty level. We do what we can so at least the children within our struggling LUN families will begin the school year this August with the school supplies provided through the Education Fund, but there's more.

**SECOND STEP:** When we get overwhelmed in projects, we break the problem down and devise a workable resolution. Therefore, with school supplies secured, we must address the matter of sport shoes and, if needed, eye exams/eyeglasses.

More donations are **crucially-needed**. We work with a local shoe merchant who gives Lev U'Neshama a discount. Also, we work with an accredited optician in town who also gives us a discount. He uses state-of-the-art equipment to check eyesight.

Lev U'Neshama is an Israeli registered non-profit charity organization, volunteer run, no business expenses whatsoever and every \$ or NIS goes into our programs.

**Shoes:** Amount Needed: 100 NIS for 150 children = 15,000 NIS  
\$35 for 150 children = \$5,250.

**Eye Exam/Eyeglasses:** Amount Needed:  
200 NIS for 50 children = 10,000 NIS  
\$60 for 50 children = \$3,030

We have **three weeks** to be in the position to provide the shoes, eye exams/eyeglasses to those children on our list, which gets longer with time.

**Your participation is urgently requested. Here is how you can help.**

Use the Zelle US to US bank transfer system (contact me at [mortsmo@aol.com](mailto:mortsmo@aol.com) for bank information).

**US Donors:** Make checks payable to Simcha Smolensky, my son, who is also a volunteer

And send to: Rabbi Simcha Smolensky  
6739 N Mozart St  
Chicago IL 60645

**Israeli Donors:** Leave cash or check donations at the Torah Gems Book Store with a note: "For Education Fund" and your contact information so I can acknowledge receipt of the donation.

Make Israeli checks payable to: טרבלסי – נייר של חן בעיים

Another option is for you to contact me to arrange for personal pickup of cash or checks.

Yaffa Smolensky, Program Manager  
Lev U'Neshama, Tzfat Israel  
Email: [mortsmo@aol.com](mailto:mortsmo@aol.com)