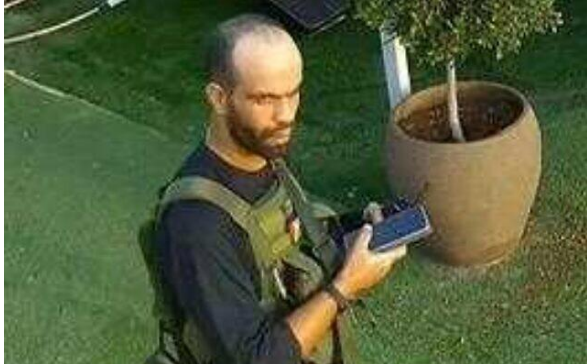


IDF says it killed Hamas commander who murdered father in front of his kids on Oct. 7

Terrorist who led onslaught on moshav Netiv Ha'asara was filmed drinking Coca-Cola from fridge of family home, moments after killing Gil Taasa in front of his two youngest sons

By [Emanuel Fabian](#) and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 11:45 am



*Ahmed Fawzi Nasser Muhammad Wadiyya, a Hamas Nukhba commander who led the massacre in moshav Netiv Ha'asara on October 7, 2023, is seen in CCTV footage from the attack that day. (Israel Defense Forces)*

**The military on Tuesday confirmed reports that a Hamas Nukhba force company commander who led the invasion of Netiv Ha'asara on October 7 was killed in a recent airstrike in the Gaza Strip.**

**Ahmed Fawzi Nasser Muhammad Wadiyya was among eight Hamas terrorists killed in the strike on a compound used by the terror group near Gaza City's al-**

**Ahli hospital**, according to a joint statement from the Israel Defense Forces and the Shin Bet.

The **military said that Wadiyya was the commander of a Nukhba force company in the terror group's Daraj-Tuffah Battalion. On October 7, he entered Netiv Ha'asara — a moshav near the Gaza border — by paraglider and oversaw the massacre of 22 of the community's 900 residents.**

He **was the terrorist who was filmed drinking Coca-Cola from the fridge of the Taasa family home**, moments after murdering [Gil Taasa](#), 46, in front of his two youngest sons, Koren, 12, and Shay, 8, inside the same home.

**Gil, a senior firefighter in the Ashkelon fire station, grabbed his gun and shot at the terrorists until he ran out of bullets**, his son Koren later recounted in an interview with the Kan public broadcaster.

Then, the **terrorists threw a grenade into the shelter they were hiding** in: "There's no way he wasn't afraid but he decided to save us and he jumped on the grenade... there was an explosion, I saw smoke, and suddenly we were covered in blood."



*Or Taasa, left, and Gil Taasa. (Courtesy)*

**Koren said the terrorists came to check that Gil was actually dead, then drank the cola that was in the fridge and left the house.** The two wounded brothers ran next door to their mother, where they hid in their safe room for hours until they were evacuated.

**Gil's oldest son Or, 17, had left early that morning to go fishing with some friends on Zikim beach**, where he was murdered in the onslaught.

The **family was updated on Monday that the IDF and the Shin Bet had taken out Wadiyya amid the ongoing war in Gaza, sparked by Hamas's October 7 massacre, which left 1,200 dead and 251 taken hostage.**

The **IDF said that the other seven terrorists killed in the Gaza City strike were also members of the Daraj-Tuffah Battalion**, including one who was involved in supplying the bombs used by the terror group to breach the Gaza security barrier on October 7.

The strike took place outside the hospital, and the military noted that it took various steps to mitigate harm to civilians. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-it-killed-hamas-commander-who-murdered-man-in-front-of-his-kids-on-oct-7/>

## Comptroller blasts political, IDF chiefs for failing to ‘bear responsibility’ for Oct. 7

*Speaking at Bar Association conference, Matanyahu Englman accuses the military of building ‘high and impassable walls’ to stymie his probe into its failures surrounding the attack*

By [Jeremy Sharon](#) Today, 4:57 pm



State Comptroller Matanyahu Englman speaks at an Israel Bar Association conference in Tel Aviv, September 3, 2024. (Tomer Neuberg/Flash90)

**State Comptroller Matanyahu Englman excoriated the country’s political and military leaders in a speech on Tuesday, accusing them of impeding inquiries into Hamas’s October 7 massacre and refusing to take any responsibility for it.**

**“In Israel, as of September 2024, there is no one who has taken personal responsibility with action alongside it — not at the political level, not at the security and military level, and not at the civilian level,”** Englman declared in a

speech at the Israel Bar Association conference in Tel Aviv.

**“There has not been a single person among the elected officials, bearers of public office, military leaders and the security establishment, who has met the proper standard and the expected time when it comes to upholding the value of bearing responsibility,”** the state comptroller added.

**Englman upbraided the IDF in particular for resisting his efforts to conduct a review of the military’s actions before, during, and after the Hamas attack,** and also chastised the Prime Minister’s Office for holding up and interfering with his review.

**The comptroller announced in December that he would conduct a wide-ranging investigation into the military’s multi-level failures. In June, the High Court ordered Englman to suspend his probe into the military and the Shin Bet “in view of the complex security reality.”**



**Englman on Tuesday criticized the defense establishment for trying to stop his review** of the IDF’s actions before October 7, saying it has “built high and impassable walls which have led to the stymying of the review,” adding that “the Prime Minister’s Office, for its part — even though it has provided material — is still putting up obstacles which are hindering and disrupting the required professional activities.”

Israeli soldiers are positioned outside Kibbutz Be’eri near the border with the Gaza Strip on October 17, 2023. (JACK GUEZ/AFP)

**In response to Englman’s comments, the IDF issued a statement saying that it respects the office of the comptroller and is open to criticism that does not “harm the war effort and the attention of the military leadership — as the High Court ruled.”**

**The IDF added that — as it said in its response to the court earlier this year — Englman’s suggested probe would “cause real and tangible harm to the security bodies’ operations.”** The military said that Englman had rejected its proposal to begin a narrower investigation into a limited number of topics.

**In his speech Tuesday, Englman blasted military and political officials, saying that “all of them, at different levels of severity, do not convey the public and principled resilience expected of them, which at its foundation is a readiness [to accept] real criticism, without limitation, even if the results are biting and tough.”**

**He said he believes that it is “very doubtful if it will be possible to restore this value in the future.”**

Military Intelligence Directorate chief Maj. Gen Aharon Haliva speaks at an intelligence officers’ graduation ceremony, January 3, 2024. (Israel Defense Forces)





Israel's top military intelligence official, Maj. Gen. Aharon Haliva, who headed the IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate, resigned in April over his role in the failures leading to October 7, while the commander of the IDF's Gaza Division, Brig. Gen. Avi Rosenfeld, resigned his post in June for the same reason.

Englman also lamented routine leaks from classified forums, such as the security cabinet, in which various senior officials and politicians have leaked information designed to push responsibility onto others.

The Prime Minister's Office did not issue a response to Englman's harsh public criticism on Tuesday. In May, the PMO pushed back against the comptroller's claim that it was not cooperating with his investigation, saying that contrary to his accusations, "every request is answered in full, including all questions regarding the prime minister, even though all the PMO teams are working around the clock on the issues of the war."

In announcing his wide-ranging probe in December, Englman vowed to "leave no stone unturned" in his investigation of the failures surrounding Hamas's October 7 attack, in which thousands of terrorists stormed into Israel and slaughtered around 1,200 people, wounding thousands more and taking 251 captive to the Strip.

"This is an event that has changed the reality on a national level," the comptroller said last year. "The reality that existed until the day of the massacre cannot continue. This premise underlies the planning of the state audit of the conduct of all the parties in the periods leading up to the massacre, on the day of the massacre itself, and in the events that Israeli citizens faced afterward." <https://www.timesofisrael.com/comptroller-blasts-political-idf-chiefs-for-failing-to-bear-responsibility-for-oct-7/>

## Official says Netanyahu's press briefing 'torpedoed' hostage deal efforts – report CNN cites source close to negotiations as saying PM's insistence on Israel staying on Gaza-Egypt border is blocking talks; far-right coalition partners applaud his stance

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



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks during a press conference in Jerusalem on September 2, 2024. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's press conference on Monday evening stirred up criticism both locally and abroad, with a source familiar with the ongoing hostage release-ceasefire deal talks charging that the Israeli premier had torpedoed negotiators' efforts with his briefing.

According to [CNN](#), negotiators had continued work on the ceasefire proposal even in the aftermath of the IDF's extraction from Gaza over the weekend of the bodies of six hostages, who were executed by Hamas terrorists just days before troops found them.

However, after Netanyahu doubled down on his demand for Israel to remain in control of the so-called Philadelphi Corridor on the Gaza-Egypt border during the [press conference](#), an unnamed source familiar with the negotiations told CNN, "This guy torpedoed everything in one speech."

During the briefing, Netanyahu argued forcefully for what he said was the "strategic imperative" to keep Israeli troops stationed along the Philadelphi Corridor, insisting that retaining control over the 14-kilometer (8.7 miles) strip of land, which Hamas has long used for smuggling weapons into the Strip, is

essential for Israel to achieve its war aims.

He also rejected the assertion that the six hostages murdered by Hamas in Gaza last week were killed because his terms had prevented a deal.

Protesters rally in favor of a hostage deal in Begin Street in Tel Aviv, September 2, 2024. (Sue Surkes/The Times of Israel)

"We didn't manage to extricate them. We were very close. It's terrible," he said. "But it didn't happen because of that decision [made by his cabinet last week, that Israel insists on continued control of the Philadelphi Corridor in any potential deal.]



**“It happened, first, because they [Hamas] don’t want a deal,” he said. “I look for every means... to bring them home,” he said of the hostages.**

Many **Israelis blame Netanyahu for the mounting number of dead hostages** and have been calling for a hostage-ceasefire agreement to free the 97 abductees taken on October 7 who are still held in Gaza — even if that means ending the conflict.

Mass **demonstrations that swept the country on Sunday** and Monday after the news of the execution of the six hostages were the largest show of support for a hostage deal since October 7, when some 3,000 Hamas-led terrorists burst across the border into Israel, killing some 1,200 people and seizing 251 hostages amid acts of brutality and sexual assault.

**Throughout the war, critics have claimed Netanyahu has put his political survival above all else, including the fate of the hostages.** His rule relies on support from his ultranationalist coalition partners, who hold key positions in government.

**Headed by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, they oppose any deal that ends the war or sets free Palestinian security prisoners** convicted of killing Israelis. They have vowed to topple the government should Netanyahu agree to a ceasefire — a step that would trigger elections and remove the prime minister from office.

**Shortly after Monday’s press conference, opposition lawmakers were quick to criticize the prime minister’s comments, accusing him of lying about his record** and failing to protect Israelis, though his far-right coalition partners lauded his tough stance.

**“What he cares about is his political survival,”** said Reuven Hazan, a political scientist at Jerusalem’s Hebrew University. “His political survival with Ben-Gvir and Smotrich doesn’t allow him to end the war and bring back the hostages.”

Netanyahu’s condition that Israeli troops remain along Philadelphi and the Netzarim Corridor, another key strip of land in central Gaza, has been rejected by Hamas as a deal breaker. It also prompted clashes with Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who says a deal that frees the hostages should be the top priority.

**Many Israelis accuse Netanyahu of obstructing a deal** in order to stay in power and say that by not ending the war, he is putting the lives of the hostages in danger.

**“Hamas was the one that pulled the trigger, but Netanyahu is the one who sentenced [the hostages] to death,”** said an editorial Sunday in the Hebrew daily Haaretz.

**Israel has seen weekly protests** in solidarity with the hostages since the start of the war. But over time, as Israelis have tried to return to a semblance of normalcy or have been preoccupied by fears of a regional war with Iran or its proxy in Lebanon, Hezbollah, the protests have dwindled in size.

But on **Sunday, hundreds of thousands of people poured into central Tel Aviv**, banging drums and chanting “Deal, now!” while a general strike on Monday drew crowds out to the streets around the country.

However, **Hazan, the political scientist, said that without large sustained protests across a broader swath of society, it’s hard to see how Netanyahu will feel enough pressure to change his approach.** And so long as his government is stable, he may stick to his demands in the negotiations to appease the far-right flank of his coalition and ignore the protests entirely.

Still, relatives of the six hostages found murdered in Gaza expressed hope that the protests marked a turning point in the war that might force progress on a deal.

In a [eulogy](#) for Hersh Goldberg-Polin, an Israeli-American who became one of the most high-profile hostages, his father spoke of the emotional resonance the deaths might have.



*Jon Polin, father of Hersh Goldberg-Polin at his son’s funeral on September 2, 2024. (Photo by Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)*

“For 330 days, Mama and I sought the proverbial stone that we could turn over to save you,” Jon Polin said. “Maybe, just maybe, your death is the stone, the fuel, that will bring home the remaining” hostages.

It is believed that 97 of the 251 hostages abducted by Hamas on October 7 remain in Gaza, including the bodies of at least 33 confirmed dead by the IDF.

Hamas released 105 civilians during a weeklong truce in late November, and four hostages were released before that. Eight

hostages have been rescued by troops alive, and the bodies of 37 hostages have also been recovered, including three mistakenly killed by the military as they tried to escape their captors.

Hamas is also holding two Israeli civilians who entered the Strip in 2014 and 2015, as well as the bodies of two IDF soldiers who were killed in 2014 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/official-says-netanyahus-press-briefing-torpedoed-hostage-deal-efforts-report/>

**Netanyahu: If we leave Philadelphi, Hamas will be able to rearm, revive, repeat Oct. 7**  
**PM rejects even 42-day IDF withdrawal from Gaza-Egypt border for sake of hostage deal, claims Israel's entire future at stake; Lapid: He wants war forever, will never make a deal**

By [Lazar Berman](#) and [Sam Sokol](#) Today, 2:08 am



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks during a press conference in Jerusalem on September 2, 2024. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

Defending himself against charges of blocking a hostage deal on Monday evening, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu argued forcefully for what he said was the “strategic imperative” to keep Israeli troops stationed along the so-called Philadelphia Corridor along Gaza’s border with Egypt.

Speaking with reporters during a rare press conference in Jerusalem, Netanyahu insisted that the 14-kilometer (8.7 miles) strip of land is essential for Israel to achieve its

war aims and that retaining control there is “central” and determines Israel’s very future.

Were the IDF to withdraw even for the 42-day first phase of a deal, in an effort to secure the release of numerous living hostages, it would never be able to return, he claimed, and thus Hamas would be able to rearm, revive, and carry out many more October 7 massacres.

He rejected the assertion that the six hostages murdered by Hamas in Gaza last week were killed because his terms had prevented a deal. “We didn’t manage to extricate them. We were very close. It’s terrible,” he said. “But it didn’t happen because of that decision [on the Philadelphi Corridor.] It happened, first, because they (Hamas) don’t want a deal,” he said. “I look for every means... to get them home,” he said of the hostages.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid castigated his comments as baseless political spin designed to keep his coalition together. Lapid noted that Netanyahu had years to retake Philadelphi and didn’t bother, and only sent the IDF to do so eight months into the current war.

The terrible truth about Netanyahu’s stated position, said Lapid, was that “he will not make a deal. He won’t bring our children home.” He wants war “forever.” Lapid called on the “more responsible” people in Netanyahu’s coalition to give him an ultimatum: “You can tell him, if there is no deal, there’s no government.”

The Hostages’ Families Forum, decrying a speech “full of lies and spins,” vowed to step up the “struggle to return the hostages” and accused the prime minister of “criminal negligence.”

**Hamas’s ‘oxygen’ supply**

Early in his prepared remarks, Netanyahu declared that Israel’s war goals are “to destroy Hamas, to bring back all of our hostages, to ensure that Gaza will no longer present a threat to Israel, and to safely return the residents of the northern border,” and asserted that “three of those war goals go through one place: the Philadelphi Corridor. That is Hamas’s pipeline for oxygen and rearmament.”

Projecting a map of Israel and Gaza on the wall behind him, Netanyahu noted that following the 2005 Disengagement, Israel controlled all of Gaza’s borders except the one with Egypt, and it was through that border that weapons reached the Strip.

“The axis of evil needs the Philadelphi Axis,” he declared, referring to Iran and its proxies, making the argument that this was the precise reason Israel “must control it” and “make permanent the fact that we are there.”



The “**significance and importance**” of Israeli control of Philadelphi, he said, was “**to ensure that we don’t have another October 7 and another October 7 and another October 7, as Hamas has promised to carry out.**”

**Criticizing Egypt for failing to secure the border**, Netanyahu insisted he had called on then-prime minister Ariel Sharon to retain control of the corridor two decades ago ahead of the 2005 disengagement from Gaza.

He **added that he had later fought against Hamas’ military build-up over the course of several governments** but was stymied by a lack of international and domestic legitimacy to retake Gaza.

**Netanyahu has come under immense criticism domestically** for allegedly blocking a deal with his insistence since July on continued Israeli control of the Philadelphi Corridor and central Gaza’s Netzarim Corridor, which divides the north of the Strip from its south.

**In July, Netanyahu added several “nonnegotiable” demands to Israel’s May 27** hostage deal proposal, including for Israeli control over both corridors.

The **Netzarim and Philadelphi corridors were not specified as locations where Israeli troops would be allowed to remain**, according to the [text of the Israeli proposal](#) from May, which has been published in full by The Times of Israel.

According to Channel 12, Netanyahu last week indicated to Defense Minister Yoav Gallant during a security cabinet meeting that he was [prioritizing keeping Israeli troops in the Philadelphi Corridor](#) over saving the lives of the remaining hostages in Gaza.

On Monday night, the prime minister dismissed the argument that the IDF would be able to return to Philadelphi after the first phase of the proposed ceasefire deal, comparing it to past promises that Israel could and would return to Lebanon and Gaza if there were any attacks from those newly evacuated territories.

“If we do leave [the Philadelphi Corridor], we may not return for 42 years, because we *did* leave and we *didn’t* return for 20 years,” he said, calling an Israeli presence on the border “a diplomatic, strategic imperative.”

“It’s a question of massive diplomatic pressure that will be applied to us by the entire world: If we leave, we will not return,” he said. “This corridor is different from all the other places — it is central, it determines all of our future.”

Despite massive pressure to withdraw from the corridor and end the war, such a withdrawal would “not bring back the hostages” but would have the “opposite” effect, he argued, also claiming that leaving the Philadelphi Corridor could enable Hamas to spirit the hostages overground across the border into Sinai and from there to Iran or Yemen during that 42-day first phase.

### **An apology and a call for unity**

While he fiercely defended his positions, dismissing both domestic and international criticism that he was responsible for blocking a hostage deal, Netanyahu did apologize to the families of the [six Israeli captives recently found dead](#) in a Hamas tunnel.



*This combination of six undated photos shows hostages, from top left, Hersh Goldberg-Polin, Ori Danino, Eden Yerushalmi; from bottom left, Almog Sarusi, Alexander Lobanov, and Carmel Gat. (The Hostages Families Forum via AP)*

**“I told the families, and I am repeating it here tonight — I ask for your forgiveness that we did not succeed in bringing them back alive.** We were close, but we didn’t succeed,” he said — naming the victims and vowing that Hamas would “pay a very heavy price” for their deaths.

**As protesters gathered outside his homes in Jerusalem and Caesarea, capping off a day of demonstrations and**

**a national strike organized by the Histadrut Labor Federation, Netanyahu insisted that in order to prevail in the existential war against Iran and its axis, “we must stand united as one person against a cruel enemy that wants to destroy all of us, all of us without any exceptions.”**

“We agreed to the formula that President Biden presented on May 31,” he continued. “We agreed to what they called the ‘final bridging proposal’ on August 16. Hamas rejected the first. Hamas is rejecting the second.”

### The day after

**Answering questions from reporters, Netanyahu insisted that Israel must maintain security control** of the border crossings on the “day after” Hamas and for the foreseeable future.

“When the day comes” and another body or organization can deal with this “under a permanent arrangement,” he said, that would be fine with him. But “right now,” Israel needs to be there to prevent more massacres, abductions and existential threats. Even though “we are very close to dismantling Hamas,” he claimed, Israel still had to tackle and find an alternative to the terror group’s civilian control.

Turning to the terms of the ceasefire deal, Netanyahu said nobody is more committed to freeing the hostages than he is.



*In Tel Aviv, protesters demanding a hostage release deal block the Ayalon Highway in Tel Aviv, September 2, 2024. (courtesy)*

**“Nobody should preach to me about this,” he said. “The formula I agreed to talks about a first stage of 42 days — after which we can go back to fighting, of course, if a solution is not found in negotiations.** It’s our decision, I insisted on it. And if a decision is made for the long-term, and a permanent arrangement is found in the Strip where someone else can take care of the security mission and protect the borders, go ahead. I currently don’t see it on the horizon.”

Asked why, if the Philadelphi Corridor is so important, he agreed to a withdrawal from Gaza in May, when the IDF had still not even taken full control of the border, he replied indirectly that he is willing to reduce forces on the Egypt-Gaza border because there is no need for troops “every meter.”

“We need to be at several locations, connected, at a certain distance from one another, with the ability to patrol along the entire road,” he said, arguing that Israel cannot rely on sensors or others to guard the border.

### Political infighting

**Netanyahu also lamented what he described as “voices in the cabinet, ministers in the government” who urged leaving the Philadelphi Corridor “even though we had already decided not to leave”** — a thinly veiled allusion to Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

Such dissent was the reason why a [cabinet vote](#) backing his position on the matter was necessary, Netanyahu claimed, insisting that he is “flexible in the places where I can be flexible” but that on the issue of the Gaza-Egypt border, “we all must insist.”

Asked about the disunity between him and Gallant, Netanyahu said that the relationship can continue “so long as there is trust,” but stressed that all ministers must be bound by cabinet decisions. “That is what is being tested now.”

Answering a question about leaks from security officials attacking cabinet decisions, Netanyahu said that “the one who makes decisions is the government, and the army and other security agencies are required to follow those decisions. I don’t see another option.”

### An end to the war

**Asked what would define the end of the war, he replied that this would be “when Hamas no longer rules Gaza.”**

Just as **was the case when the Allies defeated Nazi Germany, this would require a military and a political victory, he said, and “we’re well on the way to achieving both.”**

Told about [Biden indicating](#) earlier Monday that Netanyahu is not doing enough to secure a deal, the prime minister replied: “I don’t believe that President Biden really said that.”

Speaking for a few minutes in English, Netanyahu denounced calls for Israel to make concessions after Hamas “murderers executed six of our hostages.”

“They shot them in the back of the head...and now, after this, we’re asked to show seriousness? We’re asked to make concessions? What message does this send Hamas? It says kill more hostages, murder more hostages, you’ll get more concessions,” Netanyahu stated.

“The pressure internationally must be directed at these killers, at Hamas, not at Israel. We say yes, they say no all the time. But they also murdered these people. And now we need maximal pressure on Hamas.

“I don’t believe that either President Biden or anyone serious about achieving peace and achieving their release would seriously ask Israel, Israel, to make these concessions,” he argued. “We’ve already made them. Hamas has to make the concessions.”

### **The opposition hits back**

Reacting to Netanyahu’s remarks, members of the political opposition slammed the prime minister, accusing him of lying about his record and failing to protect Israelis.

“Netanyahu flatly lied today when he said that the return of the residents of the north is one of the goals of the war,” the National Unity party, led by former war cabinet minister Benny Gantz, said in a statement — while former defense minister Avigdor Liberman, the leader of the hawkish Yisrael Beytenu opposition party, tweeted that Netanyahu’s “legacy is the most serious security failure in Israel’s history.”

Opposition Leader Lapid dismissed Netanyahu’s press conference as “unfounded political spin,” arguing that what he said about the Philadelphi Corridor “has no relation to reality.”

“Not one professional buys this spin. Not the security personnel, not the international system, not the fighters who are actually in Gaza and know the reality there. I don’t have a presentation with pictures, but there are facts,” said Lapid. “Israel evacuated the Philadelphi Corridor 19 years ago, and Netanyahu voted in favor. Both in the government and in the Knesset. Netanyahu was prime minister for 15 years. It did not occur to him to recapture the Philadelphi Corridor.”

“The war began on October 7. Until May 20, eight months ago, he did not bother to send the IDF to the Philadelphi Corridor,” Lapid argued. “All he described today was his own failure.”

“The issue of the corridor is not Netanyahu’s concern, but, rather, the Ben Gvir-Smotrich Corridor,” Lapid continued, naming the far-right national security and finance ministers. “This is his new trick to prevent the disintegration of his coalition. It is about politics, and only politics. Netanyahu spoke today as if October 7 did not happen on his watch. As if he is not responsible and guilty of the most terrible disaster and massacre in the country’s history,” Lapid asserted, calling Netanyahu, “Mr. Failure and Mr. Disaster.”

“At least Netanyahu said one truth: that he does not want to end the war. He said it three times, that he doesn’t want to end the war — which means he doesn’t want to make a hostage deal; he wants war forever,” charged Lapid. “His words tonight had one terrible meaning: he will not make a deal. He won’t bring our children home.”

Lapid appealed to the “more responsible” people in Netanyahu’s coalition to give him an ultimatum that is the opposite of far-right minister Itamar Ben Gvir’s: “You can tell him, if there is no deal, there’s no government.”



***Opposition Leader Yair Lapid makes a video statement on September 2, 2024.  
(Screenshot: X, used in accordance with Clause 27a of the Copyright Law)***

Turning to Netanyahu’s call for unity, Lapid said that someone who truly wants unity should not demonize opponents, such as the “hundreds of thousands of patriots” who took to the streets in the past day and during Monday’s general strike.

By contrast, Itamar Ben Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, both of whom have previously threatened to topple the coalition if it approves a deal ending the war, issued statements backing the prime minister.

“We must not agree to a reckless deal and leave the Philadelphi Corridor. And just as we must not abandon the Philadelphi Corridor, we must not surrender the other principles that will ensure our victory in the war,” Ben Gvir declared.

The Hostages Families Forum said Netanyahu’s remarks showed “that he does not intend to return the hostages.”

Decrying a “speech full of lies and spins,” the forum said that “the people of Israel, most of whom support the return of the hostages, will no longer lend a hand to this criminal negligence.”

“The struggle to return the hostages will be heightened and amplified until the last of the hostages returns home — the living for rehabilitation and the dead for a proper burial,” it added.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-if-we-leave-philadelphia-hamas-will-be-able-to-rearm-revive-repeat-oct-7/>



## Netanyahu says ‘shameful’ suspension of UK arms licenses will embolden Hamas

***After foreign secretary announces decision to suspend 30 of 350 permits, insisting it is not an embargo, PM vows Israel will prevail in Gaza war ‘with or without British arms’***

By [Lazar Berman](#) and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 3:22 pm

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday blasted the British government for its [decision](#) to suspend some arms licenses to Israel, calling it a “shameful” move that will not deter Israel and will embolden Hamas.

“This shameful decision will not change Israel’s determination to defeat Hamas, a genocidal terrorist organization that savagely murdered 1,200 people on October 7, including 14 British citizens,” the premier wrote on X.

“Instead of standing with Israel, a fellow democracy defending itself against barbarism, Britain’s misguided decision will only embolden Hamas,” the post read.

Announcing the move on Monday, British Foreign Secretary David Lammy [said](#) the decision to suspend 30 of 350 licenses did not amount to a blanket ban or an arms embargo, but only involved items with concerns over their use during the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

“It is with regret that I inform the House (of Commons, the lower house of parliament) today the assessment I have received leaves me unable to conclude anything other than that for certain UK arms exports to Israel, there does exist a clear risk that they might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law,” Lammy said.

In his post, Netanyahu stressed that Israel was conducting a “just war with just means, taking unprecedented measures to keep civilians out of harm’s way and comporting fully with international law.”

This shameful decision will not change Israel’s determination to defeat Hamas, a genocidal terrorist organization that savagely murdered 1200 people on October 7, including 14 British citizens.

— Prime Minister of Israel (@IsraeliPM) [September 3, 2024](#)

The prime minister also compared Israel’s battle against Hamas, sparked by the terror group’s October 7 massacre, to Britain’s fight against the Nazis in World War II.

“With or without British arms, Israel will win this war and secure our common future,” he vowed.

Netanyahu’s post followed similar reactions from Israeli officials on Monday, with Foreign Minister Israel Katz saying Israel was “disappointed” by recent decisions made by the UK government relating to the war in Gaza.

“Israel is a state of law that operates in accordance with international law and has an independent and respected judicial system,” Katz said in a statement, adding, “A step like the one taken now by Britain sends a problematic message to the Hamas terrorist organization and its handlers in Iran.”

British exports amount to less than one percent of the total arms Israel receives, and Lammy told parliament on Monday that the suspension would not have a material impact on Israel’s security.



***In this video grab taken from footage broadcast by the UK Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) via the Parliament TV website on September 2, 2024, Britain’s Foreign Secretary David Lammy makes a statement on arms sales to Israel. (PRU/AFP)***

The export licenses pertain to components for Israel’s aerial systems, including fighter jets, helicopters, and drones. It does not pertain to the F-35 program, which is a multinational project that pools parts before disbursing them to participating countries, including Israel.

Lammy’s Labour party instituted a review of the licenses after it returned to power in July, and Lammy has visited Israel twice since

assuming office.

British officials have not said that Israel is violating humanitarian law, but believe there is a serious risk, according to the two-month assessment.

The suspension could be lifted in the future if the UK assesses that the risk of violations has diminished.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-says-shameful-suspension-of-uk-arms-licenses-will-embolden-hamas/>

## Smotrich presents 2025 budget plan, saying war is costing economy as much as NIS 250b

## **Meeting the deficit target of 4% set for 2025 will require measures including freezing public sector pay, but no tax hikes, finance minister says**

By [Sharon Wrobel](#) Today, 5:42 pm



**Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich speaks at a press conference in Jerusalem, Sept. 3, 2024. (GPO)**

Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich on Tuesday presented an initial state budget framework for 2025 based on a deficit target of up to 4 percent of gross domestic product, which will necessitate NIS 35 billion (\$9.5 billion) in spending adjustments to finance the costs of the ongoing war.

“We are in the longest and most expensive war in Israel’s history with about NIS 200 billion to NIS 250 billion (\$54 billion to \$68 billion) in direct costs,” said Smotrich at a press conference in Jerusalem.

“This war began with a huge crisis between the state and its citizens and we had to rebuild trust,” he said.

“The decisions we made for an expansionary economic policy during the war were the right ones, which kept the society and the national resilience alive, and kept the economy going as well.”

The Finance Ministry’s deficit ceiling set for 2025 is in line with the Bank of Israel’s recommendation. For this year, the government had to raise the 2024 budget deficit target to 6.6% of GDP, from a planned 2.25%, due to higher defense and civilian spending as a result of the war with Hamas. In July, the fiscal deficit already climbed above the target to 8.1%. Israel posted a budget deficit of 4.2% in 2023.

“As of now, we are still committed to meeting the deficit target for 2024 as we expect the deficit to be on a downward slope in the last quarter of the year,” Smotrich said.



**Residents check the damage caused by a rocket fired from Lebanon in the Israeli coastal town of Acre on August 25, 2024. (Jack GUEZ / AFP)**

To meet the budget deficit target set for 2025, Smotrich cited several proposals for spending and tax measures to deal with the needed budgetary adjustments of NIS 35 billion but did not provide details.

“I don’t think that at a time of war it is right to raise taxes such as corporate or income taxes,” said Smotrich. “Instead, the measures we are proposing include a freeze on planned tax changes and efficiency measures in government ministries, as well as a complete freeze on the salaries of ministers, Knesset members, and senior officials.”

Among the measures cited by Smotrich is the merging of the two lowest income tax brackets of 10% and 14%. The step would affect the low-earning working population, which currently pays a minimum rate of 10% and would be taxed according to the 14% income bracket. Another measure that is being proposed is a freeze on public sector pay.

To generate revenues, the Finance Ministry is looking into taxing “trapped profits,” which are gains earned by corporates and multinationals that are not distributed as dividends to shareholders but invested into business development, infrastructure, and research and development centers. Until now trapped profits were tax-exempt to encourage investment in Israel.

Smotrich said that he is planning to present the draft 2025 budget framework to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday, and is committed to passing it by the end of the year.

“Smotrich’s policy goes against any economic logic: Israel should choose the opposite policy of investments instead of cuts,” said the Arlozorov Forum, an independent research institute that is involved in shaping socioeconomic policy in Israel. “The Treasury’s proposal is expected to seriously damage almost all layers of the population and widen the socioeconomic gaps.”

In recent weeks discussions between Smotrich and Finance Ministry officials on the 2025 state finances have [stalled](#) and planned measures were not advanced jointly with the government. It is expected that Israel’s right-wing coalition government will be bogged down in rifts over the approval of politically tough spending cuts and tax changes necessary to deal with the fiscal hole in 2025.

However, faced with [credit ratings downgrades](#) and a widening deficit amid ballooning military and civilian

spending, and with the war against Hamas in Gaza soon to enter its 12th month, the government has come under increased pressure to maintain fiscal responsibility and credibility.

This was spotlighted by Bank of Israel Governor Amir Yaron, who [urged](#) Netanyahu to make progress on the 2025 budget plan, warning that fiscal discipline and budgetary adjustments were “critical to preserving the stability of the economy and strengthening the reputation of the Israeli economy” during the war period.

Fitch in August downgraded Israel’s credit rating, saying it expects the “conflict in Gaza could last well into 2025” and weigh on the country’s hard-hit finances. The rating agency kept a negative outlook on the economy, leaving room open for additional downgrades and raising concern about the government’s willingness to take the difficult but necessary steps to bring the fiscal deficit under control by raising taxes and curtailing non-war related spending. It is the third global credit agency to cut Israel’s credit rating this year, following S&P and Moody’s.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/smotrich-presents-2025-budget-plan-saying-war-is-costing-economy-as-much-as-nis-250b/>

## **‘Don’t you dare’: Herzog warns against reviving judicial overhaul, pleads for unity** ***In speech to Israel Bar Association, president warns against fractures in society that weaken country’s resolve***

By [Lazar Berman](#) Today, 1:25 pm

President Isaac Herzog cautioned the government on Tuesday against resurrecting its highly divisive judicial overhaul legislation from last year, issuing a strident call for unity.

“Don’t you dare,” said Herzog, speaking to the Israel Bar Association. “Let us recover and heal after the terrible break. We must not make fateful decisions regarding the country’s core values without a broad consensus, and an in-depth and shared dialogue.”



***President Isaac Herzog speaks at the Israel Bar Association annual conference in Tel Aviv, September 3, 2024. (Amos Ben Gershon/GPO)***

Referencing the bitter fight over the sweeping reform that gripped Israel in 2023, Herzog said the “fracture that weakened our resilience and strength is beginning to return to our lives” and declared that “the soul and future of the nation are at stake.”

Herzog’s speech came weeks after Justice Minister Yariv Levin reportedly [pushed for](#) the renewal of the government’s legal overhaul, which has been frozen since October 7.

“I hear the voices and initiatives of those who seek to send us back months, to the same arena where it all began, I recognize the dangerous fumes in the air and I warn against them here and honestly ask: Is this what Israeli society needs now?” continued Herzog.

“Is this what thousands of bereaved families need? This is what tens of thousands of families are asking for who don’t sleep at night out of worry for their loved ones at the front, because they are evacuated, or God forbid because their loved ones are kidnapped and held by brutal murderers? Is this what the wounded in body and soul are shouting to us? I say clearly — No!”

The controversial package of proposals, which sought to increase government control over the judiciary and limit the High Court’s power of judicial review, prompted mass protests last year, and was briefly paused after a general strike brought the country to a standstill in March 2023.

Last July, the government managed to pass a component of the overhaul, prohibiting courts from rejecting government decisions on the basis of “reasonableness.”

***Anti-judicial overhaul protesters hold a banner reading ‘Supreme Court’ outside the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, on September 11, 2023. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)***



That law was overturned in December, however, by which time the overhaul’s legislative agenda had already been frozen in the wake of Hamas’s October 7 terror onslaught that starting the ongoing war.

“It is time for us to decide on whether to pursue this with all of our strength,” the Kan broadcaster quoted Levin, one of the primary architects of the overhaul, as saying at an August cabinet meeting: “The time has come to



make the change that is needed in the judicial system.”

Earlier this week, hundreds of thousands of Israelis took to the streets demanding a hostage-ceasefire deal in response to the army’s recovery of six bodies of hostages executed by the Hamas terror organization.

The president urged all sides of the political spectrum to leave their echo chambers.

“It won’t help us if everyone climbs barricades on every issue,” he said. “Listen for a moment to other parts of the nation, to your sisters and brothers, to whole communities in Israel that think a little differently.”



**President Isaac Herzog and his wife Michal react during the funeral of killed US-Israeli hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin in Jerusalem on September 2, 2024. (GIL COHEN-MAGEN / POOL / AFP)**

Herzog, who spoke at the [funeral](#) of murdered hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin on Monday, also said that Israel’s leaders have “an urgent and immediate task — to act to the best of their ability to save those who can still be saved, and to return all our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters to their homes in peace. This is a supreme moral, Jewish and humanitarian imperative of the

State of Israel to its citizens.”

Mass demonstrations that swept the country on Sunday and Monday after the news of the execution of the six hostages were the largest show of support for a hostage deal since October 7, when some 3,000 Hamas-led terrorists burst across the border into Israel, killing some 1,200 people and seizing 251 hostages amid acts of brutality and sexual assault.

Ninety-seven of the 251 hostages abducted by Hamas on October 7 remain in Gaza, including the bodies of at least 33 confirmed dead by the IDF.

Throughout the war, critics have claimed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has put his political survival above all else, including the fate of the hostages. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/dont-you-dare-herzog-warns-against-reviving-judicial-overhaul-pleads-for-unity/>

## **Hamas release video of slain Ori Danino saying 'People of Israel: Do not neglect us' He addresses PM Benjamin Netanyahu and the war cabinet saying "you failed us on October 7."**

By [MATHILDA HELLER](#) SEPTEMBER 3, 2024 19:43 **Updated:** SEPTEMBER 3, 2024 20:50



**Ori Danino, as seen in the video (photo credit: Hamas Telegram)**

Hamas published a video of the late [Ori Danino](#), one of the six Gaza hostages who was murdered in captivity, on their Telegram on Tuesday.

The [bodies of hostages](#) Hersh Goldberg-Polin, Eden Yerushalmi, Carmel Gat, Almog Sarusi, Alexander Lobanov, and Ori Danino were found in the Gaza Strip, the IDF said on Sunday morning. The IDF retrieved the bodies of the hostages from a tunnel under the city of Rafah in Gaza.

The video starts with a montage of photos of the six dead hostages. Danino then introduces himself with his name, where he is from and where he was taken hostage from.

"Our living conditions are very difficult, there is no food, no water, no electricity," he says. He adds that there is non-stop shooting and bombing.

*Video released by Hamas showing hostage Ori Danino calling on Israel to make a deal and free him and the other hostages (CREDIT: Hamas Telegram)*

He addresses PM Benjamin Netanyahu and the war cabinet saying "you failed us on October 7."

"Today you are trying to kill us one after another in failed rescue attempts."

Danino then asks the camera, "Where were you when they shot me?" followed by several other questions about the government's absence on and after October 7.

### **To the people of Israel**

Addressing the people of Israel, he begs, "Keep doing everything until we get out of here alive."

"Get us out of here alive because at this pace no one will survive"

Speaking to his family, he told them how much he loved them: "There is not a day that I do not think of you."

Danino ends by saying, "People of Israel: Do not neglect us."

Hamas then cut to a clip of a sand timer with the words "time is running out."

At the end of the video, words appear saying, "Exchange deal... freedom and life. Military pressure... death and failure."

*Screenshot from Hamas social media, outlining the results of continued military pressure, September 3, 2024. (credit: Screenshot/Hamas Telegram)*

#### Danino's time in captivity

The 25-year-old helped other Nova attendees survive the attack and escape the scene.

Having driven himself and survivors away from the music festival, Danino decided to turn back in hopes of rescuing more attendees. It was while turning back that he was abducted by Hamas terrorists.

"He ran away from the party, got out of hell, came back to save more people, and was kidnapped with them. He survived more than 300 days in captivity to return full of hope and faith,"



Liel, his partner, said, "he excelled in everything he did. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-817615>

#### Hamas admits to killing hostages, releases video of slain hostage Eden Yerushalmi

#### Hamas has issued new instructions to guards on handling hostages if Israeli troops approach hostage holding sites.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) SEPTEMBER 2, 2024 21:33 **Updated:** SEPTEMBER 3, 2024 12:18

Eden Yerushalmi's last message to her family from Hamas captivity in video released by Hamas approved for publication by the Hostages and Missing Families Forum.

The spokesperson for Hamas' armed al-Qassam

Brigades, [Abu Obaida](#), said on Monday that the Palestinian group had issued new instructions to guards on handling hostages if Israeli troops approach hostage-holding sites, reiterating blame on Israel for the deaths of hostages.

"Netanyahu and the occupation army alone bear full responsibility for the deaths of the prisoners. They deliberately obstructed any prisoner exchange deal for their own narrow interests, and furthermore, intentionally killed dozens of prisoners through direct airstrikes," Abu Obaida said in a message on Telegram.



"Let it be clear to everyone that, following the incident in Nuseirat, new instructions have been issued to the Mujahideen tasked with guarding the prisoners. These instructions outline how to handle the situation if the occupation army approaches the location where the prisoners are being held," he added.

Screenshot from Hamas Telegram. Edited to include English translation. (credit: Canva, Hamas Telegram, screenshot)

After the announcement, Hamas published a video which began with the similar message and then continued to a recorded message of slain hostage Eden Yerushalmi before her death. In the video, she gave a message directed at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Hostages and Missing Families Forum has cleared the video for public viewing.

"Our Eden, we love you too and we miss you like crazy. You are forever in our hearts," the family wrote.

#### Rescued, escaped, died

The Nuseirat incident refers to [Operation Arnon](#), in which four hostages were rescued from the Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza, which led to the deaths of at least 100 people, according to IDF estimates, and nearly 300, according to Hamas estimates. The operation also led to the death of Arnon Zamora, for whom the operation was posthumously renamed.

The rescued hostages were Noa Argamani, 26; Andrey Kozlov, 27; Almog Meir Jan, 21; and Shlomi Ziv, 40.

The announcement came a day after the IDF recovered the bodies of six slain Israeli hostages from Gaza: Hersh Goldberg-Polin, Eden Yerushalmi, Carmel Gat, Almog Sarusi, Alexander Lobanov, and Ori Danino.

All six had been killed by Hamas at least a day before their rescue, having been found dead in the tunnels under Gaza.

Their deaths came only a few days after Bedouin-Israeli hostage [Qaid Farhan Alkadi](#) escaped from Hamas captivity and made contact with IDF troops in the area. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-817458>

## Nearly 30,000 made aliyah since war broke out, interest in aliyah spiking abroad

*Immigration and Absorption Minister Ofir Sofer (RZP) said the “growing desire to make aliyah right now may lead to tens of thousands of olim in the coming years.”*

By [OFER PETERSBURG](#) SEPTEMBER 3, 2024 14:30 **Updated:** SEPTEMBER 3, 2024 18:44



*Olim from North America arrive on a special "Aliyah flight" to the Ben Gurion airport (photo credit: Flash 90-)*

Despite the death choke of the [Israel-Hamas](#) war, over 29,000 olim (new immigrants) have arrived in Israel from various countries, mostly Western countries, according to new data released by the Immigration and Absorption Ministry last week.

The data was released before an international real estate media conference held last week in Tel Aviv focused on examining the construction industry's capabilities, specifically surrounding the absorption of olim.

Immigration and Absorption Minister Ofir Sofer (Religious Zionists) said the “growing desire to make aliyah right now may lead to tens of thousands of olim in the coming years.”

Indeed, according to the data released by the ministry and the Jewish Agency, thousands of the olim who arrived throughout

the war came during the summer months, including young families with children.

A special report by the [Jewish Agency's](#) Global Aliyah Center, which operates in collaboration with the Immigration and Absorption Ministry, revealed that the number of people who have opened aliyah files with the ministry and agency since October 7 has surpassed 30,000.

New immigrants prepare to travel to Israel as they make Aliyah. (credit: Chen Schimmel/The Jerusalem Post)

The data shows that since [October 7](#), there has been a significant increase in aliyah inquiries from Western countries compared to the same period last year.

France registered a 355% increase over the same period last year with more than 5,500 aliyah files opened. More than 6,000 files were opened in the US, a 62% increase. Canada recorded an 87% spike with more than 800 files opened. The UK showed an increase of 63%.

Over the past few months, thousands of people have participated in the immigration fairs that the Jewish Agency held around the world in collaboration with the Immigration and Absorption Ministry and the Ofek Israeli organization, and this includes young families, doctors, and more.

### **Is Israel ready to absorb thousands of olim?**

“Many Jews decided to make aliyah during a trying war, to strengthen the State of Israel, express solidarity, and take part in the Zionist story,” Sofer said. “I congratulate the new olim who arrived, thank them for the important decision they made, and call on Jews from all over the world: join and immigrate right now.”

He explained that throughout the past year, the Aliyah and Absorption Ministry announced various special programs and benefits for olim, “such as reduced purchase tax for the purchase of an apartment, extensive rent assistance in the Negev and Galilee,

dedicated programs in academia, significant grants for doctors making aliyah, and an immigrant support system.”

Jewish Agency Chairman Doron Almog said he sees this spike in aliyah as a symbol of hope.

“The exciting data on immigrants...to Israel reflect their great commitment and love for the State of Israel,” he said.

“These fill the heart and strengthen us in these difficult days. The presence of the olim alongside the State





of Israel symbolizes hope.”

World Zionist Organization chairman Yaakov Hagoel sees aliyah as the “fulfillment of the vision of generations before.”

He said, “Even after the October 7 massacre and the continued war for our security, we are witnessing an exciting influx of about 25,000 new immigrants to our country. This is a strong message of determination, faith, and deep love for the Land of Israel. This wave, along with the opening of many other immigration cases, shows the world that the Jewish people are determined to continue building their future here, in the land of their ancestors. We will continue to absorb, build, and strengthen together, even in the most difficult times.”

<https://www.jpost.com/aliyah/article-817546>

## **Russia targets Poltava military training center with devastating strike – Kiev**

***The missile attack has resulted in nearly 300 casualties, according to Ukrainian officials***

3 Sep, 2024 17:34



***Aftermath of a reported Russian missile strike on the Poltava Signal Corps Academy in Ukraine, September 3, 2024.***

© Social media

Russian Iskander ballistic missiles have struck a training center in the Ukrainian city of Poltava, according to the government in Kiev, which has estimated the death toll at 50.

The School of Military Communications and Information Technology on the north side of Poltava was home to the 179th Training Center of Ukrainian signalmen, including radar and strike drone operators. It was destroyed by two missiles on

Tuesday morning, local authorities have said.

The Ukrainian Defense Ministry has put the number of deaths at 49, with 219 injured. Rescue crews managed to save 25 people, of which 11 were pulled from the rubble, according to the military.

Poltava Governor Filip Pronin later updated the casualty toll to 50 dead, more than 235 wounded and 15 missing.

Ukrainian leader Vladimir Zelensky used the occasion to demand more air defense systems and missiles, as well as permission from his Western backers to launch “long-range strikes” into Russia.

“This is a stunning tragedy for all of Ukraine,” Zelensky’s wife Elena [wrote on X](#), accusing Russia of striking “an educational institution and a hospital,” even though no hospitals are nearby.

According to local media in Poltava, area hospitals are overwhelmed with wounded. Social media posts soliciting blood donations spoke of “190 dead defenders” and many more at risk from their injuries.

Igor Mosiychuk, a former MP and deputy commander of the notorious neo-Nazi Azov regiment, claimed that the attack may have resulted in up to 600 casualties. While blaming Russia for the strike, he also said the military command bears some responsibility for allowing so many high-value soldiers to be in one place without shelter.

The Russian Defense Ministry has not yet commented on the strike. In the absence of official information, rumors circulating on Russian social media have alleged the presence of NATO instructors at the school, including some from Sweden.

Poltava is the site of the 1709 battle in which the Russian Army under Peter the Great decisively defeated Swedish invaders under King Charles XII. The Swedes were aided by Cossacks of Ivan Mazepa, who is [revered as a hero](#) in modern Ukraine but has long been considered a traitor in Russia. <https://www.rt.com/russia/603462-poltava-signal-academy-ukraine/>

## **Czech-made Vampire destroyed in Ukraine – MOD (VIDEO)**

***The Western-supplied rocket system was discovered in Sumy Region and was taken out using a high-precision projectile, the ministry has said***

3 Sep, 2024 15:12



**Source: Russian Ministry of Defense**

Russia's Defense Ministry shared a video on Tuesday purporting to show the destruction of a Czech-made Vampire Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) used by Ukrainian forces near the Russian border.

According to the ministry, the Western-built MLRS was discovered moving and firing on Russian positions by servicemen of the 'North' group of forces during reconnaissance activities in Sumy Region. This is the region from which Ukraine launched its major

Kursk incursion into Russia last month.

After analyzing the intelligence, Russian command made the decision to destroy the enemy combat vehicle using a high-precision Krasnopol projectile, the ministry reported, noting that the crew of the Vampire was killed in the strike.

In the half-minute-long aerial footage shared by the ministry, what is described as the Vampire MLRS can be seen firing multiple rockets before being destroyed sometime later with what appears to be a single strike.

According to the Russian Defense Ministry's daily update on Tuesday, over the past 24 hours, Kiev's forces reportedly lost up to 400 servicemen and 12 armored combat vehicles, as well as three pieces of artillery, one MLRS, one anti-aircraft missile and gun system, an electronic warfare station, and 12 automobiles.

The ministry also provided an update on Ukrainian casualties since the start of its Kursk incursion. According to the latest estimates, Ukrainian forces have lost more than 9,300 troops, 80 tanks, and hundreds of other vehicles and heavy pieces of equipment since the operation began.

On August 6, Kiev deployed thousands of troops to the Russian border region with the stated goal of creating a "buffer zone" on Russian soil. However, despite making some initial gains, Ukraine's advance has since been stopped, according to Moscow, while the Ukrainian military has continued to suffer heavy casualties.

<https://www.rt.com/russia/603460-russia-destroys-vampire-ukraine/>

## EU 'regrets' Mongolian refusal to arrest Putin

***Ulaanbaatar "did not comply with its obligations" by failing to execute an ICC warrant, Brussels has stated***

3 Sep, 2024 16:21



***Russian President Vladimir Putin and Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh attend a welcome ceremony in Sukhbaatar Square in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. © Sputnik / Vyacheslav Prokofyev***

The European Union has "taken note" of Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Mongolia and expressed regret that the government in Ulaanbaatar did not detain its guest.

Putin spent two days in Mongolia, engaging in bilateral talks and marking the 85th anniversary of the WWII victory over Imperial Japan at the Battle of Khalkhin Gol.

"President Putin is under an arrest warrant by the ICC for international crimes, specifically alleged crimes of unlawful deportation and unlawful transfer of children," the EU said in a statement on Tuesday.

"The EU regrets that Mongolia, a State Party to the Rome Statute of the ICC, did not comply with its obligations under the statute to execute the arrest warrant," the bloc added.

The ICC [issued](#) a warrant for Putin's arrest in March 2023, despite having no jurisdiction over Russia. Moscow has rejected the court's accusations as baseless.

The Russian president [traveled](#) to Mongolia at the invitation of his counterpart, Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh, and met with top officials in Ulaanbaatar to discuss the two countries' strategic partnership.

Both [Ukraine](#) and the [ICC demanded](#) Putin's arrest from Mongolia, but the Kremlin said it had "no concerns," as all issues had been worked out with Ulaanbaatar in advance.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who accompanied Putin to Mongolia, said it is natural for people with "Nazi-like deeds" to worry about two neighbors who fought side by side in WWII.

"I pity them if they are concerned about this," Lavrov told journalist Pavel Zarubin on Tuesday.

<https://www.rt.com/news/603464-eu-mongolia-putin-arrest/>

## Asian nation told ICC to ‘get lost’ with Putin warrant – Medvedev

*The International Criminal Court should consider the consequences if someone dared to enforce the order, the ex-Russian president has said*

3 Sep, 2024 10:56



**FILE PHOTO:** Deputy head of the Russia's Security Council and chairman of the United Russia political party Dmitry Medvedev. © Sputnik / Alexey Maishev

The International Criminal Court's (ICC) arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin turned out to be a meaningless scrap of paper, his predecessor Dmitry Medvedev has said. Medvedev's comments came after Putin arrived in Mongolia, a signatory to the ICC, which issued a warrant for the Russian president's arrest in March last year, without facing any obstacles.

Writing on Telegram on Tuesday, Medvedev, who now serves as Deputy Chairman of Russia's Security Council, mocked the Western reaction to Putin's visit to Ulaanbaatar. *"The servile European Union has reportedly expressed 'concern' to Mongolia over the visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin,"* he said.

However, the Asian country *"has just told the ICC and Eurodegenerates to go do to themselves something that Russians and Mongols found a word for together, back in the 13th century"* and get lost, Medvedev suggested.

The ex-president went on to argue that the ICC – which he labeled a *"half-baked 'court'"* – should be afraid of *"a scenario where some madman tries to carry out their illegal arrest warrant. [...] In that case, their lives would be worth no more than the piece of paper on which this sh\*tty statute is written,"* he warned.

In March 2023, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Putin and Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova for allegedly participating in unlawful deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia. Moscow does not recognize the ICC's jurisdiction and declared the order null and void. Russia says that Ukrainian children were evacuated for safety reasons, and that they can be returned to their parents or guardians upon request.

Putin's visit to Mongolia was his first foreign trip to a country that recognizes the ICC statute. Ahead of the trip, the court's spokesman, Fadi el-Abdallah, said that the country had to cooperate with the ICC on the detention, adding that failure to do so could trigger an *"appropriate"* response from the body.

However, the Rome Statute, under which the ICC operates, provides for exemptions if an arrest would *"breach a treaty obligation"* with another country or violate the *"diplomatic immunity of a person or property of a third state."*

Before Putin landed in Ulaanbaatar, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov allayed fears of a potential attempt to arrest the Russian leader. *"We have excellent relations with our friends from Mongolia,"* he said, noting that Moscow *"has no concerns"* about the ICC warrant. <https://www.rt.com/russia/603443-mongolia-icc-get-lost-medvedev/>

**OP ED**

## Israel: Ceasefire Deal Will *Prevent* Hostages from Coming Home, Anti-Government Protests Only Embolden Hamas

by [Bassam Tawil](#) September 3, 2024 at 5:00 am

**After murdering six Israeli hostages last week, Hamas leaders are undoubtedly rubbing their hands with delight as startled and distraught Israelis take to the streets to demand an immediate hostage-ceasefire deal with the Islamist terror group. Hamas leaders, who are closely observing the protests, are likely to harden their stance in the hope that the Israeli government will give in to the demonstrators' demands. Pictured: Protesters demanding a hostage-ceasefire deal with Hamas are gathered around a bonfire on September 2, 2024 in Tel Aviv, Israel. (Photo by Amir Levy/Getty Images)**



The aim of the execution of six Israeli hostages by the Iran-backed Palestinian terrorist group Hamas was to shock the Israeli public and incite it to rebel against the Israeli



government. The goal of the executions, which reportedly took place in a tunnel in the Gaza Strip last week, was also to convey to the Biden administration the need to increase pressure on Israel to accede to most of Hamas's demands in exchange for the release of the captives the terrorist group is holding in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas leaders are undoubtedly rubbing their hands with delight as startled and distraught Israelis take to the streets to demand an immediate hostage-ceasefire deal with the Islamist terror group. Since the discovery of the bodies of the hostages (one of them, Hersch Goldberg-Polin, was a US citizen) last weekend, tens of thousands of people have been protesting in various parts of Israel. They are demanding that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government accept any deal with Hamas that would see the remaining 101 hostages – dead and alive – reunited with their families.

Israel's biggest union, the *Histadrut* (General Federation of Labour in Israel), joined the anti-government protesters by [announcing](#) a nationwide strike as part of the pressure to force Netanyahu to accept any deal that would secure the release of the hostages. These are exactly the scenes Hamas is happy to see: demonstrators blocking main highways and clashing with the police.

The latest anti-government protests in Israel, triggered by the murder of the six hostages, are being extensively [covered](#) and celebrated by Hamas-affiliated media outlets. The protesters are being referred to by Hamas and its supporters as "[Jewish settlers](#)," although they live inside Israel, not in West Bank settlements.

Hamas, which does not recognize Israel's right to exist, views all Jews living on land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea as "settlers." For Hamas and many Palestinians, there is no difference between a Jew living in Tel Aviv and a Jew living in a settlement in the West Bank: every Jew is a "settler."

Hamas, in addition, does not distinguish between a right-wing and left-wing Jew. Some of the thousands of Israelis murdered, wounded and kidnapped during the October 7, 2023 Hamas-led attack on Israel were [known](#) for their advocacy for coexistence with Arabs, providing employment for Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip, and fostering genuine connections. One of the hostages, 83-year-old Oded Lifshitz, is, together with his wife Yocheved, a peace activist. Before his abduction, he regularly [transported](#) Palestinian patients from the Gaza Strip to receive medical treatment in hospitals across Israel.

Vivian Silver, 74, an Israeli-Canadian peace activist from Kibbutz Be'eri near the border with the Gaza Strip, was [murdered](#) by Hamas terrorists during the October 7 attack. Silver's movement, Women Wage Peace, was established in 2014 to pressure the Israeli government to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians.

Hamas will not compromise or soften its stance to enable a deal because of the demonstrations. Hamas leaders, who are closely observing the protests, are likely to harden their stance in the hope that the Israeli government will give in to the demonstrators' demands, including an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. Hamas has the Israeli public pressuring their government to allow Hamas to "live to fight another day": to rearm, regroup and continue attacking Israelis – as Hamas official Ghazi Hamad [vowed](#):

**Hamad:** "The Al-Aqsa Flood is just the first time, and there will be a second, third, and fourth..."

**News anchor:** "Does that mean the annihilation of Israel?"

**Hamad:** "Yes, of course."

Sadly, by focusing all their ire on the Israeli government, the protesters are, ironically, playing into the hands of Hamas and *undermining* efforts to reach a deal.

Hamas leaders are banking on the Biden administration to compel the Israeli government to give in to the terror group's demands. The Hamas leaders see the ongoing tensions between the Biden administration and the Netanyahu government as an encouraging development. It has long been the dream of Hamas and many Palestinians to see the US turn its back on Israel.

Hamas's primary goal is to remain in power and return to the pre-October 7 era, when it built a large terror infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. Hamas knows it will not be able to accomplish its aims without a full Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and an official end of the war.

That is why Hamas is insisting that Israel withdraw from the Philadelphi Corridor along the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. Israel's presence there obstructs Hamas's efforts to smuggle weapons into the Gaza Strip through cross-border tunnels, as it has been doing for the past two decades.

Hamas is reportedly demanding US and international guarantees that Israel will not target the terror group anytime in the future. Until then, Hamas will continue to hold on to many of the hostages as an "insurance policy."

Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, the mastermind of the October 7 atrocities, will not release all the hostages at once. He will continue to physically surround himself with many of them to ensure that Israel does not kill him. Sinwar does not care how many Palestinians in the Gaza Strip perish, as long as he is permitted to stay alive.

Even if Hamas were to initially release 10 or 20 hostages as part of any agreement, who could ensure that the remaining captives would be released? Are we supposed to take Hamas's word for it? Are we supposed to believe that the Americans, Egyptians and Qataris would be able to force Hamas to comply with the terms of any agreement?

Hamas is only interested in a deal that would keep it in power and make Israel lose the war. Hamas does not feel under pressure, at all, to reach any deal. Why should it? If US President Joe Biden were serious about reaching a deal, all he has to do is phone the leader of Qatar and tell him, as he allegedly told Netanyahu a few weeks ago, to "stop bullshitting me!"

The hostages-ceasefire negotiations have broken down because of insufficient pressure from the Biden administration on Hamas's patrons in Qatar. The failure of the negotiations should be attributed to Qatar's lack of action against the Hamas leaders who are living in luxury in Doha. Qatar is not doing anything because it is not under any serious pressure from the Biden administration. Has the Biden administration considered using the threat of withdrawing the US Central Command from Qatar's Al-Udeid Air Base from to pressure the Gulf state's rulers into convincing their friends in Hamas to free all the hostages?

*Bassam Tawil is a Muslim Arab based in the Middle East. The work of Bassam Tawil is made possible through the generous donation of a couple of donors who wished to remain anonymous. Gatestone is most grateful.*

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/20917/israel-protests-embolden-hamas>

## Red Power

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SM70iYv\\_CU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SM70iYv_CU)

**Excellent overview of Grid problem and energy industry problems in Texas rdb**

B"SD

### **From: Lev U'Neshama - Tzfat Israel**

Sufficient and generous donations from many generous and concerned people enabled Lev U'Neshama to provide school supplies shopping coupons to every Lev U'Neshama family. The parents and children are redeeming the coupons now and very excited to be getting ready for school in Tzfat. The family-owned office supply store in Tzfat is delighted to participate and also to have the business, especially now during wartime.

However, the school supplies coupons were Part One of the Education Fund project and now we face Part Two; the mounting requests for sport shoes and eye exams/eyeglasses for the children in need of them. A child can be sponsored for a pair of sport shoes for \$40 and \$75 will sponsor a child for an eye exam and eyeglasses. Eyeglasses are an obvious need and students are not allowed to wear rubber flip-flop sandals to school. Our Lev U'Neshama families tend to have many children and it becomes an impossible situation to get the shoes and eyeglasses for many children from an already tight budget.

Help is urgently needed; school begins in two to three weeks, depending on the school system opening date.

Donations may be made to Dr. Ron Beals' organization or checks made payable to:

Simcha Smolensky

and sent to: Rabbi Simcha Smolensky  
6933 N Kedzie Ave  
Unit 116  
Chicago IL 60645

Yaffa Smolensky, Volunteer Program Manager Email: [mortsmo@aol.com](mailto:mortsmo@aol.com)