

10242025 NEWS SPECIAL Don't miss Lev U'Neshama NOTE at end!

Sorry but very busy and didn't get news out yesterday and late today so here is a combination rdb

Trump says 'Israel not going to do anything with the West Bank' as US fumes over annexation vote

'The Israelis can't treat us like Joe Biden,' administration official tells Tol, day after Knesset advanced preliminary legislation to annex parts of West Bank while Vance was visiting

By [Jacob Magid](#), [Ariela Karmel](#)

and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 1:21 am



US President Donald Trump answers questions from reporters during a roundtable on criminal cartels in the State Dining Room of the White House, October 23, 2025, in Washington. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

US President Donald Trump on Thursday declared "Israel is not going to do anything with the West Bank," as officials from his administration leveled harsh criticism against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government after lawmakers advanced legislation to annex parts of the West Bank while Vice President JD Vance was visiting the country.

"Don't worry about the West Bank," Trump told reporters at the White House, in his first comments on the matter since the Knesset voted on the two bills Wednesday. "Don't worry about it," he repeated. "Israel's doing very well. They're not going to do anything with it."

The measures were passed despite opposition from Netanyahu, in light of Trump's vow last month that he would not allow Israel to make the controversial move.

"The Israelis can't treat us like we're Joe Biden," a Trump administration official told The Times of Israel late Thursday, speaking on condition of anonymity. Netanyahu regularly sparred with Biden during the Democratic president's administration and was accused at times of seeking rifts with him for domestic political gain.

The decision by the senior US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, to draw a comparison to Biden also harkened back to another US-Israeli rift in 2010, under the Obama administration, when the Interior Ministry announced that 1,600 housing units would be built in a Jewish neighborhood of East Jerusalem while then-vice president Biden was in town.



Then-US vice president Joe Biden waves as he and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu walk to give statements to the press in Jerusalem, Tuesday, March 9, 2010. (AP Photo/Debbie Hill, Pool)

Another US official warned Thursday that Trump will "f***" Netanyahu if the Israeli leader jeopardizes the Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal, according to a Channel 12 report.

"Netanyahu is walking a fine line with President Trump. If he keeps going, he'll f* up the Gaza deal. And if he f***s up the deal, Donald Trump will f*** him," the official reportedly told the outlet's correspondent Barak Ravid.**

"In English, it sounds even cruder," news anchor Yonit Levi

noted at the end of Ravid's report.



The source told Ravid that Vance, in Israel at the time, was shocked by the decision and said that Israel was acting in an "unsupervised" manner.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, right, speaks alongside US Vice President JD Vance at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem, October 22, 2025 (Marc Israel Sellem/POOL)

Netanyahu updated Vance about the Knesset vote during the vice president's visit, assuring him that it was merely a "preliminary vote" and would "go nowhere," the public broadcaster Kan reported.

"This cannot happen while I am visiting here," Vance was said to have retorted. American officials reportedly warned Netanyahu that the vote could provoke a backlash and destabilize ongoing negotiations over the ceasefire.

Leaving Israel on Thursday afternoon, Vance said at the airport that he was told the initial passage of the bill was a "political stunt" and "purely symbolic," but that, if so, it was a "very stupid political stunt, and I personally take some insult to it."

Related: [Israel would lose 'all support' from the US if it annexes West Bank, Trump warns](#)

'Days of destiny'

Amid the mounting frustration in Washington, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio landed in Israel Thursday evening and met with Netanyahu in Jerusalem.

The two issued statements at a joint press appearance that lasted less than two minutes, and did not take any questions.

In his brief remarks, Netanyahu said that Israel now faces "days of destiny."

"We want to advance peace. We still have security challenges, but I think that we can work together... [to] both address the challenges and seize the opportunities," Netanyahu said, characterizing the carousel of senior Trump officials visiting Israel over the past week as being part of a circle of trust and partnership" between Israel and the US.

"We have more work ahead of us, but we feel very positive about it. We're making good progress," Rubio said, referencing the Gaza ceasefire deal inked earlier this month.

"No one's under any illusions. We've already done the impossible once, and we intend to keep doing that," said the top US diplomat.



Rubio noted that Trump has made building on the Gaza ceasefire a "top priority," as evidenced by his dispatching of senior aides Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, followed by Vance and the secretary of state.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio (left) and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu give brief statements to the press at Netanyahu's office in Jerusalem, October 23, 2025. (Oren Ben Hakoon/Flash90)

"It's a very important achievement, but there's more work to be done and bigger achievements that lie ahead... We feel very positive and confident that we're going to get there despite substantial obstacles," Rubio said, without elaborating on what those obstacles are.

While meeting on Wednesday with Vance, Netanyahu reportedly expressed willingness to assist in implementing the next stages of Trump's Gaza ceasefire plan.

However, Israeli television [reported](#) that the prime minister has also outlined several red lines to the US over the past week, including absolute opposition to any Turkish presence in the Gaza Strip and to the Palestinian Authority or Hamas playing a governing role there "the day after" the war. He is also said to have insisted that a full IDF withdrawal would only take place after Hamas is fully disarmed and the Strip demilitarized.

Arab and Muslim countries reject annexation

Meanwhile, over a dozen Arab and Muslim countries signed onto a joint statement spearheaded by Saudi Arabia blasting the annexation votes as "blatant" violations of international law.

The countries said they "condemn in the strongest terms the approval [by the] Israeli Knesset of two draft laws aiming to impose so-called 'Israeli sovereignty' over the occupied West Bank, and on Israeli illegal colonial settlements as a blatant violation of international law."

Among the statement's signatories were Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, Kuwait, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Egypt and Nigeria,



A picture taken from the E1 corridor, a sensitive area of the West Bank, looking eastward towards the Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adumim with the Jordan Valley in the background, June 30, 2020. (Photo by AHMAD GHARABLI / AFP)

The issue of annexation is tricky for Netanyahu, whose hard-right base is broadly supportive of annexation. Many in Netanyahu's coalition have been loudly calling to advance annexation as a response to the recognition of a Palestinian state by Western powers last month.

Doing so, however, could deal a blow to Trump's hopes for Saudi-Israeli normalization, a long-time goal of the American president seen as the next step in the

Abraham Accords agreements between Israel and neighboring countries. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-says-israel-not-going-to-do-anything-with-the-west-bank-as-us-fumes-over-annexation-vote/>

WATCH: Rubio has been 'extraordinary friend,' with 'circle of trust, partnership,' Netanyahu says
US Secretary of State Marco Rubio commented that President Donald Trump's Gaza ceasefire deal is a "priority" for the administration.

By JERUSALEM POST STAFF OCTOBER 23, 2025 18:38 Updated: OCTOBER 24, 2025 01:16



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio at his office in Jerusalem, October 23, 2025. (photo credit: HAIM ZACH/GPO)

US Secretary of State [Marco Rubio](#) met with Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) in Jerusalem on Thursday.

"This is a circle of trust and partnership. You've been an extraordinary friend of Israel," Netanyahu said, while also referencing [US President Donald Trump's speech](#) in the Knesset earlier this month.

"Now we face days of destiny. We want to advance peace, we still have security challenges, but I think that we can work together, and by working together, both address the challenges and seize the opportunities, and plenty of both," he added.

"We have more work ahead of us, but we feel very positive about it. We've been making good progress," Rubio said when discussing [Trump's](#) Gaza ceasefire deal.

Rubio: 'We've done the impossible once, intend to keep doing that'

"No one is under any illusions. We've already done the impossible once. And we intend to keep doing that. And we can," he continued.

Trump "has made this a top priority...evidenced by the fact that both Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner were here for much of the week and he spent time with them. And the Vice President [Vance] just left and then I'm here now, today, because this is a priority. It's a very important achievement," Rubio commented.

"We feel very positive and confident that we're going to get there, despite substantial obstacles. We're going to get there," Rubio concluded.

Rubio landed in Israel on Thursday to continue overseeing the implementation of phase one of the US-brokered Gaza deal.

He was greeted by US Ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, and is met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later in the evening.

The US has continuously sent senior members of its administration to ensure the deal is carried out in its entirety, beginning with President Donald Trump, who came to Israel earlier this month, when Hamas released the 20 living hostages it held and the remains of four hostages.

A week after Trump's visit, US envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner arrived, followed shortly by Vice President JD Vance. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-871439>

Hamas and Palestinian Authority leaders meet in Cairo for first time to discuss Gaza's future

As Gaza factions urge pressure on Israel to uphold the cease-fire, Hamas and Palestinian Authority delegations met in Cairo to discuss postwar political and security arrangements and control of the Rafah crossing

Einav Halabi | 18:06



Hussein al-Sheikh and Khalil al-Hayya

The Hamas delegation was led by Khalil al-Hayya, while the Palestinian Authority team was headed by Deputy President Hussein al-Sheikh and intelligence chief Majed Faraj. A Palestinian Authority official criticized Israel's rejection of the PA as the governing authority in Gaza, saying, "All Palestinians fall into two main camps, with a few minor factions — it's either Fatah or Hamas. What does Israel think, that it can import technocrats from China? That's not how it works."

He added, "We hope that with international pressure, the Palestinian Authority will be the one to govern the Gaza Strip. It's the natural outcome." Al-Sheikh and Faraj also met with Egyptian officials Wednesday to discuss developments in the Palestinian arena after the war. Al-Sheikh held talks with Egyptian intelligence chief Maj. Gen. Hassan Rashad, and the two agreed to continue supporting implementation of the cease-fire agreement in Gaza.

Earlier this week, a Hamas delegation arrived in Cairo to monitor the implementation of the cease-fire agreement with mediators and other Palestinian factions. During their visit, delegations also met with Egyptian representatives ahead of planned unity talks between the Palestinian factions, which Egypt intends to host to help determine Gaza's future after the war.



Rafah crossing (Photo: Reuters/Stringer)

According to the White House plan, the Israel-Hamas agreement includes not only a cease-fire but also political and security reconstruction of Gaza in coordination with Palestinian entities and the U.S. administration. Egypt is expected to host an international reconstruction conference for Gaza in the second half of November as part of these broader efforts, which include returning secure administrative control of the Strip to the Palestinian Authority.

Meanwhile, Ali Baraka, head of Hamas's Department of National Relations Abroad, said the group told mediators that Israel must be compelled to fully honor the first phase of the cease-fire agreement before moving to the next stage. "The mediators expressed their commitment to the agreement's success and acknowledged that Israel has not fully complied," he said, adding that "they are in contact with the U.S. administration to apply effective pressure on Israel to ensure it respects the deal."

Islamic Jihad also commented on the recent developments, saying its delegation — led by Secretary-General Ziad Nakhleh and his deputy, Dr. Mohammed al-Hindi — met with Egyptian intelligence chief Hassan Rashad in Cairo. "The meeting reviewed the latest situation in Gaza, emphasizing the need to ensure the rapid entry of vital humanitarian aid," the group said.

According to the statement, "The secretary-general reaffirmed the movement's commitment to the cease-fire and the need to hold Israel accountable for its violations and ensure that all terms of the agreement are met, including the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Strip." <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/r1sl4vdr1g>

Hamas terrorists breached southern border, stole IDF reservist's ATV, victim tells Maariv



The ATV was later identified by the owners in a video showing armed, masked men riding the vehicle in Gaza next to a UN vehicle.
ByDAN EZRAOCTOBER 24, 2025 02:57

Masked, armed men riding the stolen ATV in Gaza. (photo credit: Screenshot/Section 27a of the Copyright Act via Maariv)

Residents of Gaza border communities are grappling with a renewed sense of insecurity after an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) was stolen from a family home before being identified in footage as being used by Hamas terrorists in the heart of

Gaza.

The incident, which occurred on the October 1, the day before Yom Kippur, has sparked anger and frustration among residents, who point to ongoing [failures in border security](#) in the area.

Aviv Moaziz, a resident of Moshav Klahim and a reservist in the IDF's 226th Paratroopers Brigade, told *Maariv* about the incident: "In the middle of the war, I received the difficult news that my father was ill with cancer. I was released from the reserves to help at home."

"On Yom Kippur, I returned from synagogue and discovered that the ATV had been stolen. After a long and arduous search, we received TikTok videos of the stolen tractor with all the identification marks that helped us verify that it was really ours," he added.

"We realized that the ATV was taken into the Gaza Strip, supposedly while our army was 'in Gaza.' It is known that there is a crime and theft problem in the south. Where is the army and where are the police now that we have reached a situation where an ATV can cross over to Gaza? I am shocked by the frightening ease with which the thieves crossed our most sensitive border. [Two years](#) have passed, and it feels as if we have learned nothing. Frustrating, sad, and scary. I am already out of words," he added.



Aviv Mueziz, the owner of the stolen ATV. (credit: Shmulik Kroizer via Maariv)

'Thieves simply entered the house'

Moaziz's sister, who was at home at the time of the theft, added: "Our ATV was stolen when my family was at synagogue and I was at home with a high fever, sleeping. The thieves simply entered the house, took the keys, and dragged the ATV until they drove it around the area."

"After about two weeks, we found the thief on TikTok and sent the police pictures and videos of him. We did most of the work for them, but the ATV never came back to us. Today, we understood why: our tractor was smuggled into Gaza. It turns out there are still gaps in the fences. During this ceasefire, Hamas is collecting

powerful vehicles and tools, and we all know what it is for. We don't even want the ATV back now," he added.

"We just want the army and all of our security services to wake up and not wait for another October 7 to happen to us. An ATV that powerful is no joke. So to the police who didn't do anything and to the IDF who doesn't guard our fences; thank you for letting them prepare for the [next security blunder](#)," he continued.



A source familiar with the details told *Maariv* that the ATVs are often used to steal weapons from IDF bases and ammunition trucks en route to the south, providing a means of quick escape from sparse guard forces at the bases.

A United Nations vehicle in the background of a video featuring the stolen ATV in Gaza. (credit: Screenshot/Section 27a of the Copyright Act via Maariv)

In a video recently circulated on TikTok, Hamas terrorists are seen riding a stolen ATV while carrying rifles near a mob of Gazans while a truck tows the vehicle. The footage illustrates the ease with which thieves were able to smuggle the ATV across the border.

Armed terrorists drive stolen ATV past UN vehicle

The footage also shows the ATV being driven past what appear to be United Nations vehicles.

The case raises serious concerns among residents of the surrounding area, who fear that the lessons of October 7 have not yet been internalized.

Residents expressed frustration with the lack of police enforcement regarding crime in the area, and the IDF's failure to prevent vehicles from being smuggled into the hands of terrorist organizations.

The [Israel Police](#) released a statement regarding the incident: "Upon receiving the complaint, an investigation was opened. Extensive operations are being carried out to locate the stolen vehicle and return it to its owner. The Israel Police is resolutely against the theft of off-road vehicles, which are often used to commit criminal offenses, including the theft of weapons from the IDF. Allegations arising regarding breaches in the fence that allowed the vehicle to pass into the Gaza Strip should be referred to the security agency responsible for the fence." <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-871484>

Trump admin., Israel planning to divide Gaza into two zones to undermine Hamas - WSJ

Multiple Arab nations argue that dividing Gaza would lead to a full Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip, and are unlikely to commit troops to be a part of the peacekeeping for under those terms.

By [CORINNE BAUM](#) OCTOBER 23, 2025 13:46



IDF troops marking the "yellow line," where Israeli troops had withdrawn to in accordance with the US-brokered hostage, ceasefire agreement, October 20, 2025. (photo credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT)

The US and Israel are considering dividing [Gaza](#) into separate zones controlled by the IDF and Hamas, with reconstruction measures only occurring in the Israeli-controlled areas as a way to ensure Hamas disarms, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on Wednesday.

The plan has reportedly alarmed Arab negotiators, though the WSJ noted it had repeatedly come up in peace talks.



Multiple Arab nations argue that dividing Gaza would lead to a full Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip, and are unlikely to commit troops to be a part of the peacekeeping for under those terms.

A senior US administration official told the *WSJ* that the plan was preliminary and that more information would be coming out in the coming days.

The US-backed Gaza plan proposed an [international peace force](#) to provide security in the Strip, but the details are not fully worked out.

An Israeli soldier stands near military vehicles, amid a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, at the Israel-Gaza border in southern Israel October 12, 2025. (credit: REUTERS/Ammar Awad TPX IMAGES OF THE

DAY)

Arab nations unlikely to provide troops if Gaza divided

Arab nations believe that the Palestinian Authority should run [Gaza](#) and the peacekeeping force, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu strongly opposes this.

A royal source from the UAE told *N12 News* that the Emiratis were uninterested in contributing troops to the peace force without involvement from a Palestinian body.

"The Americans are trying to persuade Saudi Arabia and the Emirates to become involved in managing Gaza, and we are refusing. We want involvement from the Palestinian Authority. Without it, Riyadh refuses and will not intervene, neither directly nor indirectly."

"We sensed a deep lack of understanding within the American administration regarding the society inside Gaza," the source added. "Witkoff was persuaded by our words and admitted that there is no solution for Gaza other than the Palestinian Authority entering there, but that's what Netanyahu doesn't want."

The plan Kushner is backing would see Israel slowly build up control in areas of Gaza beyond the yellow line to undermine Hamas, Tel Aviv-based researchers told the *WSJ*.

White House officials told the American outlet that Jared Kushner is the driving force behind the plan, alongside US Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff. US President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance have reportedly approved the plan.

"Kushner raised the issue and was immediately rejected. Witkoff changed the subject to what concerns us, which is the mutual defense agreement with the US and the nuclear energy program for peaceful purposes near Neom. Arrangements for that are currently being made through direct channels with Washington," the Emirati source told *N12*.

Some officials briefed on the plan noted to the *WSJ* that the plan needs more concrete answers to questions to be viable, such as how to provide social services to Palestinians who choose to relocate to the proposed IDF-controlled portion of Gaza.

According to officials, the Trump administration is also considering rebuilding areas that Hamas had not controlled in hopes that it would improve conditions for Gazans and serve as a symbol of a future without Hamas.

There was also concern about how to ensure that Hamas terrorists don't enter the Israeli-controlled side and attack from within. US officials said that one option to prevent this was a vetting system controlled by IDF troops.

Some mediators accused the US administration of trying to buy time while figuring out how to govern a post-war Gaza.

"We want to help, but it's important to understand that we need a broader, long-term picture that guarantees we will truly see a Palestinian state," Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to the president of the United Arab Emirates, told *N12*.

"A pause and a return to the pre-October 6 situation will not help anyone. We must look at what happened, which was an earthquake, and act from there."

The *WSJ* report said that the Trump administration's priority is ensuring that the US-backed ceasefire deal holds in Gaza.

"The Emirates will help, but they need two things: first, political clarity about the direction this is heading, as many other countries do," Gargash said.

"This is not a unique position for the UAE. The second thing is the need for operational and security arrangements. You don't want to send your children into a battlefield without a clear understanding of what's happening there."

This comes as [Vance](#) tours Israel with Kushner and Witkoff. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is set to arrive to Israel on Thursday. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-871393>

Clearing Gaza's surface of bombs will take up to 30 years, aid group says

The US-brokered ceasefire has raised hopes that the huge task of removing the unexploded ordnance from among millions of tons of rubble across Gaza can begin

. ByREUTERSOCTOBER 23, 2025 20:13Updated: OCTOBER 23, 2025 20:23



Smoke rises following an Israeli strike in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, October 20, 2025.(photo credit: REUTERS/STRINGER)

Clearing the surface of [Gaza](#) of unexploded ordnance will likely take between 20 to 30 years, according to an official with aid group Humanity & Inclusion, describing the enclave as a "horrific, unmapped minefield."

More than 53 people have been killed and hundreds injured by lethal remnants from the two-year Israel-Hamas war, according to a UN-led database, which is thought by aid groups to be a huge underestimate.

A US-brokered ceasefire this month has raised hopes that the huge task of removing them from among millions of tons of rubble can begin.

"If you're looking at a full clearance, it's never happening, it's subterranean. We will find it for generations to come," said Nick Orr, an Explosive Ordnance Disposal expert at Humanity & Inclusion, comparing the situation

with British cities after World War Two.

"Surface clearance, now that's something that's attainable within a generation, I think 20 to 30 years," he added.



A drone view shows people gathering to bury unidentified bodies of Palestinians, who had been held in Israel during the war, at a mass burial site after they were handed over by Israel, amid a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, in Deir Al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip, October 22, 2025. (credit: REUTERS/Dawoud Abu Alkas/File Photo)

"It's going to be a very small chipping away at a very big problem."

Orr, who went to Gaza several times during the conflict, is part of his organization's seven-person team that will begin identifying war remnants there in essential infrastructure like hospitals and bakeries next week.

For now, however, aid groups like his have not been given blanket Israeli permission to start work on

removing and destroying the ordnance nor to import the required equipment, he said.

COGAT blocks items with 'dual use' from entering Gaza

[COGAT](#), the arm of the [IDF](#) overseeing Gaza aid, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. It blocks items from entering Gaza that it considers have "dual use" - both civilian and military.

Orr said it was seeking permission to import supplies to burn away bombs rather than detonate them, to ease concerns about them being repurposed by Hamas.

He voiced support for a temporary force such as one foreseen in the [US-brokered Gaza deal](#).

"If there is going to be any kind of future inside of Gaza, there needs to be an enabling security force that allows humanitarians to work," Orr said. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-871450>

'Our goal is a stable, civilian-governed Gaza,' CENTCOM spox. Tim Hawkins tells 'Post'

He described the new Civil-Military Coordination Center in Israel as "a key mechanism" for ensuring that Gaza's transition toward stability and civilian governance is both secure and sustainable.

By [AMICHAEL STEIN](#) OCTOBER 23, 2025 20:14 Updated: OCTOBER 23, 2025 23:42



US CENTCOM spokesperson Commander Tim Hawkins speaks during an interview at the US Navy 5th Fleet headquarters in Bahrain's capital Manama on August 13, 2023. (photo credit: MAZEN MAHDI/AFP via Getty Images)

The new Civil-Military Coordination Center (CMCC) in Israel is "a key mechanism" for ensuring that [Gaza's transition toward stability](#) and civilian governance is both secure and sustainable, US

Central Command (CENTCOM) spokesperson Cmdr. Tim Hawkins said Thursday.

The CMCC, which began operating this week near Kiryat Gat, has an important role in coordinating international, humanitarian, and military efforts as the ceasefire enters its second week, he told *The Jerusalem Post* from CENTCOM headquarters in Tampa.

Building a framework for stability

"The CMCC enables partner nations, NGOs, international institutions, and private-sector stakeholders to get on the same page," Hawkins said. "It's about ensuring that humanitarian, logistical, and security assistance flows into Gaza efficiently and effectively."

While not specifying which countries might [send forces to Gaza](#), he said there was significant interest in joining the efforts there.

Even though many people consider the CMCC to be a military coalition, its mandate is far broader, Hawkins said.



Israeli soldiers operating in the northern Gaza Strip, on July 22, 2025. (credit: Oren Cohen/Flash90)

“It’s not just about other militaries,” he said. “We’re talking about international stakeholders, humanitarian groups, and private-sector actors all working together.”

Several international partners have already arrived at the CMCC, Hawkins said.

“The deputy commander of the CMCC is a UK general officer,” he said, adding that “more countries and organizations are joining in the coming days and weeks.”

Monitoring the ceasefire moment by moment

Asked about the CMCC’s role in maintaining the ceasefire, Hawkins described an “operations floor” that

allows real-time monitoring of [developments inside Gaza](#).

“This enables us to see what’s happening on the ground as it happens,” he said. “We bring together data from international partners, NGOs, and institutions that have eyes and ears on the ground. That helps us know where assistance is needed most – and also ensures that the ceasefire holds.”

Hawkins emphasized that monitoring the ceasefire is central to the mission.

“A stable and secure Gaza is our focus,” he said. “That’s why this center exists.”

Coordination with Israel

The CMCC’s location in Israel ensures close coordination with the IDF, Hawkins said.

“Naturally, we’re working with the IDF,” he said. “They have representation just like many other nations and organizations do.”

Regarding claims by some Israeli officials that Washington is limiting Israel’s freedom of action in Gaza, Hawkins said: “The US has an ironclad commitment to Israel’s security and defense. We’re partners in this effort to bring about a stable and peaceful Gaza.”

He declined to elaborate about reported policy debates, saying only that senior US leaders have been clear in their public positions.

Reflecting on the ceasefire’s early days, Hawkins acknowledged the challenges ahead.

“It’s a very fragile situation,” he said. “Coming off two years of conflict is never easy. But that’s exactly why we stood up the CMCC: to coordinate international efforts and keep this process on track.”

CENTCOM remains focused on helping Gaza move “toward civilian governance,” which is “the ultimate measure of success,” Hawkins said.

'Full operations within weeks'

Regarding the timeline for when the CMCC will be fully operational, he said: “Over the next two weeks, as international partners integrate, we expect the Coordination Center to reach more full operational capability.”

Once that happens, “We’ll definitely look to highlight that progress and welcome media to see how the process works,” Hawkins said. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-871442>

Less than 300 calories a day: Hostages to face long-term effects from starvation

Professor Yuval Khalad, an expert in human physiology, explains what happens to the body step by step as it enters a state of extreme, prolonged hunger, and what the long-term effects could be.

By [DR. ITAY GAL](#) OCTOBER 24, 2025 07:43 Updated: OCTOBER 24, 2025 07:48



EVYATAR DAVID, a 24-year-old hostage, is seen in a Hamas video released last month. While our hostages starve in tunnels, the world remains blind to their suffering, the writer charges. (photo credit: Twitter/X)

The horror behind the starvation menu: [Testimonies from released hostages](#) reveal not only torture and mental anguish but also a prolonged physical process

of slow collapse.

During their captivity, which lasted nearly two years for some, the hostages received minimal food, sometimes less than 300 calories a day.

In these conditions, where the body requires seven to eight times more energy just to maintain basic functions - not to mention providing building blocks for bodily systems - they had to survive on the number of calories that might be suitable for a small child for a single meal.

JPost Videos

According to [reports from family members and the hostages themselves](#), many received a [quarter of a pita daily](#), sometimes with a [spoonful of rice](#) or a date, and, in rare cases, half a cup of murky water or seawater. There were also days when they received no food at all. Occasionally, they were given a small amount of beans or a spoonful of tahini, but most of the time, the diet was nutritionally poor, resulting in a significant caloric deficit.

For comparison, an adult who is not particularly physically active requires around 2,000 to 2,500 calories per day just to maintain a caloric balance.



Evyatar David (L), Rom Braslavski. (credit: **Screenshots/Canva**)

Furthermore, maintaining the proper and healthy function of the body's systems requires not only an adequate amount of calories but also a high-quality food composition, including complex carbohydrates, healthy fats, proteins, minerals, and vitamins. The result for the hostages was the body being exposed to an extreme physiological state, where it had to break down itself in order to survive.

Prolonged starvation alters the body's biochemistry

Professor Yuval Khalad, an expert in human physiology, explains that prolonged starvation like this alters the body's biochemistry. After just a few days without an adequate energy supply, the body enters an "emergency mode."

First, it burns the carbohydrate stores in the liver and muscles, which are the immediate, available sources of energy.

Then, it shifts to using fat and protein as fuel sources. The most difficult stage is the breakdown of proteins, which essentially replaces carbohydrates as the body's most accessible source of energy.

Proteins, which in a balanced and healthy state serve as building blocks for bodily systems, hormone producers, enzymes, antibodies, and more, are now consumed for energy to support the brain and vital organs to survive. The heavy toll is evident in muscle breakdown, bone, connective tissue, and even internal organs such as the heart and liver, to supply energy.

At this stage, Professor Khalad describes a sharp weight loss, along with a general decrease in metabolism. The body tries to slow down every possible process to conserve energy; the pulse slows, blood pressure drops, body temperature falls, and the person begins to feel cold even in warm conditions.

According to testimonies, the hostages shivered from the cold even inside sealed rooms. "At the same time, there is a sharp decrease in muscle and bone mass because they are being broken down for energy and minerals to vital body systems. In fact, the body begins to consume itself," adds Professor Khalad.

After several weeks of such extreme deprivation, deeper damage occurs. The muscle system is nearly entirely depleted, connective tissues break down, and the heart itself loses muscle mass.

"This is a stage where there is a real danger to life," emphasizes Professor Khalad. "The heart muscle weakens, blood vessels constrict, and the risk of life-threatening arrhythmias increases. At the same time, the immune system, which relies on an intake of proteins and carbohydrates, collapses, and the body becomes vulnerable to any infection."

In addition to internal organ damage, starvation also affects the brain. The hostages, according to family members, suffered from a sharp decline in concentration, apathy, emotional detachment, and a sense of disconnection from reality - clear signs of advanced hunger.

"The body provides limited energy to the brain mainly to preserve vital functions," explains Professor

Khalad. "This is why prolonged starvation leads to a sharp drop in mood, depression, and sometimes hallucinations."

As starvation becomes chronic, serious hormonal problems also arise. In men, there is a sharp decline in testosterone, in women, menstruation stops, and in both sexes, there is an increase in the stress hormone cortisol.

At the same time, liver and kidney functions decline, and they can no longer filter toxins or maintain the body's salt balance. In such situations, a person could die from drinking even a small amount of salty water or from a mild infection.

The damage from prolonged starvation does not end with release. After returning to normal life, a long and complex process of nutritional rehabilitation is required, but even this can be dangerous, especially in the initial phase.

"When a starved body begins to receive food again, especially carbohydrates, a condition called 'refeeding syndrome' or 're-feeding' can develop, where the reintroduction of calories causes severe electrolyte disturbances that can lead to heart failure and thus pose a life-threatening risk. The body simply doesn't know how to deal with food after such a long period of deprivation," says Professor Khalad, which requires a gradual approach to nutritional rehabilitation while monitoring electrolyte levels in the blood.

The returned hostages, according to the treating doctors, lost dozens of kilograms of body weight, and some appeared pale, in an extreme state of muscle wasting.

They now require long-term medical care, including muscle and bone rebuilding, gradual nutritional balancing, psychological treatment, and the provision of many vitamins. Some still struggle to stand for more than a few minutes, while others suffer from chronic muscle cramps, general weakness, and hair loss.

"Such extreme hunger is not just a state of food deprivation; it is an extreme and chronic caloric deficit that poses a real threat of total systemic collapse of the body," concludes Professor Khalad.

"Every cell and system is forced to work on its last reserves. When starvation lasts for months or years, it can cause irreversible damage. Therefore, it is very likely that even after intensive treatment, some of the victims may be left with the lasting scars of Hamas's horrors for the rest of their lives."

Our duty is to minimize it as much as possible and allow the returning hostages to resume a functional, healthy daily life, both physically and mentally, as best we can. <https://www.jpost.com/health-and-wellness/article-871494>

'System rotten to the core': Israeli FM Gideon Sa'ar slams ICJ, UNWRA

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar on Thursday sharply criticized the International Court of Justice, calling The Hague-based tribunal "a corrupt political circus."

By PESACH BENSON/TPS OCTOBER 23, 2025 16:32 Updated: OCTOBER 23, 2025 17:20



Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar (right) and his Albanian counterpart, Elisa Spiropali, sign a cooperation agreement in Jerusalem on Oct. 22, 2025 (photo credit: Rafi Ben Hakoon/TPS-IL, Ronen Horesh/TPS-IL)

[Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar](#) on Thursday sharply criticized the International Court of Justice, calling The Hague-based tribunal "a corrupt political circus."

Speaking at a joint press conference in Jerusalem with his Albanian counterpart, Elisa Spiropali, Sa'ar said, "This is not a court – it is a corrupt political circus, which Israel's enemies are using as a weapon against it. It is being used to force Israel

to take steps that will endanger our security."

On Wednesday, the [ICJ issued an advisory opinion](#) that Israel must allow the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees to provide humanitarian aid in Gaza. The court ruled that claims that the UN agency is compromised by Hamas were unfounded and that Israel is obligated to ensure essential supplies, including food, water, fuel, shelter, and medical aid, reach Palestinians in Gaza.

Sa'ar's attacks on UNRWA

Sa'ar attacked [UNRWA](#), saying that the agency remains compromised.

"We will not agree to cooperate with UNRWA, an organization whose employees participated in the October 7 massacre. It is shocking and shameful that a UN organization is infected with terrorists. UNRWA still

employs over 1,400 Hamas terrorists! There is no party in the world that can force this on Israel. This evil partnership is currently protected by the so-called UN 'court.' This system is rotten to the core," Sa'ar insisted.



Twelve UNRWA school principals who are members of Hamas's military wing. (credit: IMPACT-se report)

Israeli officials demand the agency be stripped of its authority in Gaza and defunded amid revelations that members of the agency's staff participated in Hamas's October 7 attacks. UNRWA is banned from operating in Israel, and Israeli officials are prohibited from cooperating with the agency. Palestinian refugees are the only refugee population with their own dedicated UN agency. The rest of the world's refugees fall under the mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Commitment to peace plan

Sa'ar also reiterated Israel's commitment to the [US peace plan](#).

"Israel is committed to working for the success of the Trump plan. There are difficulties in implementation, but we are doing and will do everything in our power to work for its success. Hamas and Islamic Jihad must disarm. Gaza must be demilitarized. They must no longer pose a threat to the security of Israel and its citizens. Hamas attacks against our forces will not be accepted – and will be met with powerful responses," Sa'ar said.

On the issue of hostages, Sa'ar urged immediate action. "Hamas must abide by the agreement. We know that it can easily return most of the 13 remaining hostages. It is deliberately slowing the return to delay reaching the second stage – disarmament. Hamas is barbarically abusing families who have already suffered for more than two years and only want to bring their sons home. We demand the return of all the hostages that Hamas is holding immediately without delay!"

Earlier in the day, Sa'ar and Spiropali held private and extended meetings at the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem. The two ministers signed memoranda of understanding on cooperation in diplomatic training and public diplomacy. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-871422>

US mulls Gaza aid plan to replace controversial GHF fund amid UN resistance

Washington is examining a proposal to create 12–16 humanitarian centers along IDF lines in Gaza, replacing the controversial GHF fund with the Red Crescent and Samaritan's Purse; UN agencies would have to coordinate with the US military

[Reuters](#)|21:26

Alongside the "Gaza division plan," which envisions reconstruction beginning only on the Israeli-controlled side of the enclave, the United States is weighing a new proposal to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza that would replace the operations of the controversial Gaza Humanitarian Foundation it supports.

According to an American source and a humanitarian official familiar with the details, the proposal is one of several options being reviewed as Washington seeks to expand the amount of aid entering Gaza under the cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas. That agreement stipulates an increase in humanitarian deliveries to the Strip.



Distribution of humanitarian aid in Gaza (Photo: Eyad Baba/ AFP)

A copy of the proposal obtained by Reuters describes its operational backbone as a "humanitarian belt in Gaza" — the establishment of 12 to 16 humanitarian centers along the line to which IDF forces withdrew after the cease-fire. These centers would serve civilians on both sides of the line.

The proposed centers would include facilities where terrorists could voluntarily surrender their weapons in exchange for amnesty, as well as future

bases for an international force expected to help disarm Gaza.

According to the plan, still in early stages, the GHF fund would be replaced by the Red Crescent of Morocco and the United Arab Emirates and by the Christian evangelical aid organization Samaritan's Purse. These entities would operate the humanitarian centers, while the UN and Gaza-based relief organizations would be tasked with distributing the aid — in coordination with the CMCC (Civil-Military Coordination Center) established by the U.S. military in Kiryat Gat.



(Photo: AP/ Jihad Alshrafi)

The CMCC, which oversees the entry of humanitarian and security aid into Gaza, would monitor convoy security — including by drone — and ensure Hamas does not interfere with aid deliveries. Under the proposal, all humanitarian shipments to Gaza would be rerouted through the new centers within 90 days.

Israel and the U.S. have accused Hamas of stealing humanitarian supplies during the war, a charge the group has denied.

UN agencies and aid groups are expected to react warily to the emerging plan, which closely resembles the GHF's operations — secured aid compounds protected by armed convoys. Before the cease-fire, both Israel and the U.S. sought UN cooperation with the GHF, but UN officials refused, questioning the fund's neutrality and accusing it of militarizing aid distribution and contributing to the displacement of Palestinian civilians.

"Such 'aid centers' are very concerning because they resemble GHF sites in areas previously controlled by the IDF," a senior humanitarian official told Reuters.

Reuters noted that the proposal reflects a "conceptual approach" still under U.S. review. An American official told the agency that it is not the only idea under consideration and declined to speculate on its chances of implementation. "Several approaches are being discussed to deliver aid effectively to Gaza's population. Nothing is final," the official said.



(Photo: Eyad Baba/ AFP)

The GHF has suspended its operations in Gaza. Its last humanitarian deliveries were made 13 days ago — the day the cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas took effect.

Earlier Thursday, The Wall Street Journal reported that a separate U.S.-backed initiative under discussion would divide Gaza into two zones — one under Israeli control and one under Hamas — with reconstruction initially limited to the Israeli-controlled side. The plan is reportedly led by Jared Kushner, son-in-

law of President Trump, and has drawn opposition from Arab mediators.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/byb1fw00rlx>

Israeli jets strike Hezbollah training camp, missile manufacturing facility in Lebanon



The IDF reported identifying terrorist operatives at the training camp. The release stated that Hezbollah terrorists were trained to shoot and use a variety of weapons at the camp.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) OCTOBER 23, 2025

14:10Updated: OCTOBER 23, 2025 20:25

Smoke billows over Kfar Tebnit after an Israeli strike near Lebanon's border with Israel, in Lebanon, September 18, 2025. (photo credit: Illustration/REUTERS/Ali Hankir TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY)

IAF fighter jets struck a series of Hezbollah terrorist targets, including a training camp, in the Bekaa Valley of southern Lebanon on Thursday, the IDF reported.

The Bekaa Governorate is located next to the Lebanese border with Syria, north of the Golan Heights.

The IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate had identified terrorist operatives at the training camp who were trained to shoot and use various weapons, the IDF said.



Israeli aircraft also reportedly struck a [Hezbollah](#) precision-missile manufacturing site in the area, as well as additional terrorist targets in the Sharbine area of Srobbin in northern Lebanon, it said. "The storage of weapons, the presence of terrorist infrastructure sites, and conduct of military training against the State of Israel by Hezbollah terrorists constitute a blatant violation of the understandings between Israel and Lebanon and pose a threat to the State of Israel," the IDF said.

A vehicle carries the coffins of former Hezbollah leaders Hassan Nasrallah and Hashem Safieddine, who were killed in Israeli airstrikes last year, during a public funeral ceremony, in Camille Chamoun Sports City Stadium, on the outskirts of Beirut, Lebanon February 23, 2025. (credit: REUTERS/THAHER AL-SUDANI)

IDF kills Hezbollah platoon commander

On Wednesday, the IDF killed Hezbollah Radwan Force platoon commander [Issa Ahmad Karbala](#) in a strike in southern Lebanon. The area where the strike occurred is roughly halfway between the Israeli border and Beirut. "The terrorist [Karbala] facilitated the transfer of weapons in Lebanon and promoted terrorist attacks against the State of Israel," the IDF said. "The activities of the terrorist constituted a violation of the understandings between Israel and Lebanon. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-871401>

Rubio at Gaza coordination HQ: Israel has met its ceasefire commitments, Hamas must disarm

Terror group 'cannot be involved in governing Gaza,' says top US diplomat, adding 'there is no plan B,' only Trump's 20-point peace plan; calls UNRWA a Hamas 'subsidiary' that can't play role in aid delivery

By [Nava Freiberg](#), [Tol Staff](#) and [Jacob Magid](#)

Today, 7:10 pm



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks to the media at the Civil-Military Coordination Center for Gaza in southern Israel, October 24, 2025. (Fadel Senna/Pool Photo via AP)

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the latest top US official to visit Israel, said Friday that "there is no plan B" for Gaza, only US President Donald Trump's broad peace plan, and that annexation of the West Bank by Israel would be "a threat to the peace process."

Rubio stressed that Israel has met its commitments under the first phase of 20-point Trump plan, which began with the ceasefire on October 10, and that Israel would

have to be "comfortable" with the makeup of the international force that will enter Gaza in the second phase, which is still being hashed out.

Hamas will have to release the remains of deceased hostages and disarm, he said, adding that UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, will not be permitted to help deliver aid to Gaza because it is a "subsidiary" of the terror group.

Hamas "cannot be involved in governing Gaza in the future," Rubio stressed, adding that this has been agreed by all the countries that have signed up to Trump's plan, and are to provide money, personnel or both in order to advance it.

Broader regional normalization with Israel could be a "byproduct" of the Gaza process, added Rubio, who arrived in Israel on Thursday.

Speaking to journalists at the US-Israel Civil-Military Coordination Center in Kiryat Gat, which has been set up to oversee the ceasefire and the continued implementation of the Trump plan, Rubio said, "This is a historic

mission.”

Among countries alongside the US and Israel already with a presence at the CMCC, which was formally opened by US Vice President JD [Vance on Tuesday](#), are the UK, Germany, Denmark, Canada and Jordan. Dozens of regional and world leaders attended a summit with Trump in Sharm el-Sheikh on October 13 where the president and the leaders of Egypt, Qatar and Turkey [signed a further document](#) setting out a general framework regarding Gaza’s future.

Implementing the September 29 Trump plan is “not going to be a linear journey. There’s going to be ups and downs and twists and turns,” Rubio said. “But I think we have a lot of reason for healthy optimism about the progress that’s being made.”

Rubio said there is an increasing presence of staff from the US State Department “and related entities” at the Kiryat Gat center, which “will continue to grow” to “provide personnel [for] things like emergency response and the coordination of humanitarian assistance.”

Shortly after Rubio spoke, the US State Department announced that longtime diplomat Steven Fagin would serve as the civilian lead of the Center. A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Fagin has served as US envoy to several Middle East countries. (Lieutenant General Patrick Frank, commander of US Army Central (ARCENT), is heading the US Army team.)

In order to get to the next phases of the Trump plan, Rubio said, the center is focused on ensuring the success of the initial ceasefire phase.

“We’ve got to get through the process that we’re involved in right now, which is making sure the ceasefire holds without anything disrupting it, making sure people are getting the life-sustaining aid that they need in a way that’s not being looted or stolen or diverted in any way, and at the same time, creating the conditions for the Stabilization Force to come in as soon as it possibly can be put together to provide the stabilization we need to move to the further phases of this plan,” he said. The International Stabilization Force is described in Trump’s plan as “the long-term internal security solution” for Gaza.



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks with Maj. Gen. Yaki Dolf as he visits the US-Israel Civil-Military Coordination Center in Israel, October 24, 2025. (Fadel Senna/Pool Photo via AP)

“On the other side of that Yellow Line,” he said, referring to areas of Gaza outside Israel’s control, “there is still a terrorist group that remains armed.”

“And we’ve seen them take actions against their own population,” said Rubio, alluding to instances of Hamas executing opponents.

He urged “that there be more media coverage given to the fact that Hamas has brutalized Palestinians, has brutalized Gazans over the last few days. That’s something to point to.”

Asked about reported claims by Hamas that it is part of the committee forming Gaza’s next government, Rubio appeared to dismiss the notion and stressed that Hamas can have no role in the future governance of Gaza. He said that all the countries now working with the US on Trump’s 20-point Gaza peace plan had agreed to that.

“Everyone who signed onto this plan, all of these other countries, agreed, everyone agreed, that Hamas cannot govern, and cannot be involved in governing the future of Gaza. Everyone’s agreed to that.”

West Bank annexation would ‘threaten this whole process’

Rubio declined to say at the press conference that Israel would need US “permission” to renew fighting against Hamas in Gaza if the group continues to pose a threat, while emphasizing that the Trump plan has broad regional support and is “the best” and “only plan.”

Asked if Israel could resume fighting Hamas independently if the group rearms or regroup, Rubio said, “I don’t think this has to do anything with permission or anything of that nature... Basically, we’re all committed to making this plan work. There is no plan B. This is the best plan. It’s the only plan. It’s one that we think can succeed. It’s one that we believe is on the way to success.”

“If Hamas refuses to demilitarize, it’ll be a violation of the agreement, and that’ll have to be enforced,” he said, in response to a separate question. “I’m not going to get into the mechanisms by which it is going to be enforced, but it’ll have to be enforced.”



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks to the media at the Civil-Military Coordination Center in Israel, October 24, 2025. (Fadel Senna/Pool Photo via AP)

Rubio went on: **“This is a deal, and a deal requires conditions to be met. Israel has met their commitments. They’re standing at the Yellow Line, and that is contingent upon the demilitarization,”** he said, noting that demilitarizing Gaza under the second phase of the deal would be **“a long-term project.”**

“We want to help create the conditions here so that people in Gaza don’t have to be terrorized by Hamas and in fact, have lives,

jobs, businesses and a better future,” he said.

Rubio’s comments came a day after US Vice President JD Vance, at the end of a visit to Israel, slammed as “very stupid” a preliminary vote by the Knesset to apply Israeli sovereignty to West Bank settlements, which was opposed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Following Vance’s criticism, Netanyahu tried to distance the government from the vote, claiming that it was an opposition “provocation” opposed by his religious coalition partners and all but “one disgruntled member” of his own Likud party. (In fact, the majority of votes in favor of the bill, which cleared its preliminary reading 25-24, were cast by coalition members, with Netanyahu’s far-right coalition partners in Religious Zionism and Otzma Yehudit supporting it.)



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, right, speaks alongside US Vice President JD Vance at the Prime Minister’s Office in Jerusalem, October 22, 2025 (Marc Israel Sellem/POOL)

Rubio on Friday echoed Netanyahu’s statement, saying the vote was led by “elements that tried to use it to embarrass Netanyahu” during Vance’s visit.

“Suffice it to say, we don’t think it’s going to happen,” Rubio said of annexation. “More importantly, it’s not, from a legislative standpoint, structured in a way that could happen.

“But it would also threaten this whole process,” he added. “Everyone has to understand if something like that were to happen right now, a lot of the countries that are involved in working on this probably aren’t going to want to be involved in this anymore.

“It’s a threat to the peace process, and everybody knows it,” Rubio said. “But I’m not getting to the middle of Israeli politics. We’re focused on peace and security.”

UNRWA a ‘subsidiary of Hamas’

Asked if UNRWA would assist in providing humanitarian aid to Gaza as the US-overseen process unfolds, Rubio said: “UNRWA is not going to play any role in it.”

The comment came after the International Court of Justice on Wednesday dismissed Israel’s allegations that Hamas had infiltrated the aid agency and, in an advisory [ruling](#), said that Israel was obligated to cooperate with UNRWA. A law passed by the Knesset last year banned such cooperation. Israel has [reportedly](#) informed the US that it will not comply with the ICJ’s non-binding position.



A truck loaded with humanitarian aid waits to cross from the Egyptian side of Rafah en route to the Kerem Shalom crossing into the Gaza Strip on October 20, 2025 (AFP)

“The UN is here,” Rubio said. “We’re seeing the work they’re doing, the World Food Programme. There’s also nonprofit NGOs, humanitarian assistance organizations that are involved in this, Samaritan’s Purse. It’s a conglomeration of about 8-12 groups that are here.”

“We’re willing to work with them if they can make it work. But not UNRWA. UNRWA became a subsidiary of Hamas,” Rubio said.

Israel claims that UNRWA has been thoroughly infiltrated by Hamas, that hundreds of UNRWA employees are Hamas members, that UNRWA employees participated in the October 7, 2023, massacres (an allegation [partially accepted](#) by UNRWA), and that the agency disseminates incitement to hatred and violence against Israel.

When asked about the involvement of Turkey in Gaza's post-war governance, Rubio also said Israel must be "comfortable" with the countries deploying troops to the territory as part of the International Stabilization Force envisioned under the ceasefire.

Israel has [said](#) that no troops from Turkey, a Hamas ally, will be deployed to Gaza.

"We haven't formed that force yet, so there's still work going on," Rubio said Friday. "Obviously, as you put together this force, it'll have to be countries that Israel is comfortable with as well."



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan holds a signed document during a summit to support ending the two-year Israel-Hamas war in Gaza after a ceasefire deal, October 13, 2025, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. (Suzanne Plunkett/Pool via AP)

"There are a lot of countries that are expressing interest right now," said Rubio. "I don't want to get into anything on who's being vetoed, who's not being allowed. Obviously, every member of this force has to be someone who has the capability and willingness, but also someone that everyone's comfortable with, including Israel."

Asked separately about the Palestinian Authority's role in Gaza's post-war governance, Rubio said, "We've expressed our concerns about the Palestinian Authority as it stands today."

Israel has rejected a role for the Palestinian Authority in Gaza, saying the body incites to terrorism in its school system and through payments to terrorists.

"Certainly the need for reform as far as what role it's going to play in the future of Gaza," said Rubio. "That's yet to be determined, if any role at all. We don't know."

Gaza's future governance "is going to be something that has to be worked on collectively with Israel, with partner nation states. For it to work, everyone has to agree to it," he said, emphasizing that Gaza "cannot be a place that is governed by anyone who wants to use it as a launchpad for attacks against Israel."



US President Donald Trump and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas pose for a photo in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, October 13, 2025. (Suzanne Plunkett, Pool Photo via AP)

"If it is, then there will be another war," he said. "There will never be peace as long as there's an area or a territory that's being used as a launchpad to threaten Israel's security. Everyone understands that, and everyone who signed on to this deal understands that."

In addition, Rubio said, the remains of 13 slain hostages "are going to be released" from Gaza.

"That's going to happen," he said. "If it doesn't, then the deal got broken, but it's going to happen."

Israel has accused Hamas of withholding the remains of slain hostages it has access to, in violation of the deal, but the White House has not publicly embraced Israel's account. Hamas claims it is working to locate the remaining bodies under the rubble in Gaza.



In accordance with the deal, Hamas released the last remaining 20 hostages on October 13, within 72 hours of Israel's October 10 withdrawal to the Yellow Line. All were young men abducted on October 7, 2023, when Hamas-led terrorists stormed southern Israel to kill some 1,200 people and take 251 hostages, sparking the war in Gaza.

It released the remains of none of the 28 deceased hostages within the deadline, returned four soon after the deadline expired on October 13, and has returned another 11 in the days since.

The 13 deceased hostages whose bodies were still held in Gaza as of October 22, 2025: (Top row from left) Meny Godard, Ran Gvili, Sahar Baruch, Dror Or; (Second row

Joshua Mollel, Itay Chen, Asaf Hamami, Oz Daniel, Hadar Goldin; (Bottom row) Sudthisak Rinthalak, Lior Rudaeff, Amiram Cooper, Omer Neutra. (Collage by Times of Israel; Photos: Courtesy)

Rubio said the end of the war could open the door to expanding the Abraham Accords, which normalized relations between Israel and several Arab nations, and which were brokered by Trump in 2020, during his first term.

Broader regional normalization “could be a byproduct of achieving some of this,” he said. “We’d like to have as many members of the Abraham Accords as possible.”

“I think what we’re doing here could help create the momentum for that to occur,” he added. “I’m not going to mention the countries’ names because it’s up to them to announce it.”

“There are some countries you could probably add right now if we wanted to, but we want to do a big thing about it, and so we’re working on it,” said Rubio. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/rubio-at-gaza-ceasefire-hq-israel-has-met-its-commitments-hamas-must-disarm/>

US flies surveillance drones in Gaza airspace to monitor Israel-Hamas ceasefire compliance - NYT

The drone operation was carried out with Israel's consent and is being used to monitor ground activity in the area.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) OCTOBER 24, 2025 23:14 Updated: OCTOBER 24, 2025 23:17



Smoke rises following an Israeli strike in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, October 20, 2025. (photo credit: REUTERS/STRINGER)

The United States is flying surveillance drones over the Gaza Strip to monitor the US-brokered ceasefire deal between Israel and [Hamas](#), Israeli and US military officials told *The New York Times* in a report published on Friday.

The drone operation was carried out with Israel's consent and is being used to monitor ground activity in the area, according to one US defense official and two IDF officials. The officials were not able to share the

drones' flight paths, but added that the surveillance is done to support a "Civil-Military Coordination Center" in southern Israel, which includes about 200 US military personnel, the NYT added.

US Secretary of State [Marco Rubio](#) toured the center on Friday.

Not the first time US military flew drones in Gaza

The US military had previously flown drones, specifically MQ-9 Reaper drones, in the [Gaza Strip](#) to assist Israeli forces in locating hostages, the report added.



The NYT had also cited several officials from the Trump administration, who spoke to the US newspaper on condition of anonymity and said there was concern that Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) would vacate the ceasefire and hostage deal.

Israeli soldiers stand atop military vehicles, after Israel's government ratified a ceasefire with Hamas in Gaza, on Israeli side of the Israel-Gaza border, in Israel, October 10, 2025. (credit: REUTERS/SHIR TOREM)

Former US ambassador to Israel, Daniel Shapiro, stated that the surveillance drones in Gaza are "a very intrusive version of US monitoring on a front where Israel perceives an active threat." NYT quoted him as saying, "If there was total transparency and total trust between Israel and the

US, there wouldn't be a need for this, but obviously the US wants to eliminate any possibility of misunderstanding." <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-871547>

Netanyahu, Egyptian intel chief meeting transforms dialogue into strategic cooperation, expert says

Senior INSS researcher Ofir Winter posits that Israel and Egypt may update peace agreement to allow both armies to strengthen border security.

By [GIORGIA VALENTE/THE MEDIA LINE](#) OCTOBER 24, 2025 14:34



Egypt's intelligence head Hassan Rashad (C) is pictured on the sidelines of a summit meeting on Gaza in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh on October 13, 2025. (photo credit: Khaled Desouki/AFP via Getty Images)

Two days after a discreet, strategic meeting between Egyptian and Israeli officials at the prime minister's office in Jerusalem, both sides signaled renewed efforts to turn months of back-channel security coordination into a blueprint for Gaza's "day after" - and to reset brittle Egypt-Israel ties.

For more stories from The Media Line go to themedialine.org

On Oct. 21, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Hassan Rashad, [Egypt's intelligence chief](#), for talks focused on Gaza,

border security, and bilateral coordination, according to Israeli officials.

The visit followed a tense week surrounding the [Sharm El Sheikh summit](#), during which some leaders indicated they would not attend if Netanyahu did. The Israeli leader ultimately withdrew, formally citing a clash with the holiday of Simhat Torah. The episode highlighted the regional sensitivities Cairo must navigate even as it maintains channels with Israel.

"This high-level meeting also marks a return to Egypt's pragmatic approach in balancing its relationships with Israel, its role as a regional mediator, and domestic public opinion. By engaging in discreet diplomacy, Egypt demonstrates its ability to navigate complex geopolitical waters while maintaining its influential position in the Middle East," said Samir Ragheb, director of the Arab Foundation for Development and Strategic Studies, to The Media Line.

The central theme of the Jerusalem talks, Israeli and regional analysts say, is shifting from mere conflict management to defining [Gaza's long-term future](#). Israeli and Egyptian services have kept up quiet coordination throughout the war. The goal now, said Ofir Winter, senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), is to lift that cooperation "from the tactical level to the strategic one."



Palestinians seek aid supplies from the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), in the central Gaza Strip, August 4, 2025. (credit: REUTERS/STRINGER)

"Israeli and Egyptian security officials have been in contact throughout the war. Even in the absence of direct dialogue between el-Sisi and Netanyahu, the quiet security-strategic dialogue between the agencies has been largely maintained and helped bridge tactical gaps and prevent misunderstandings between the sides," Winter told The Media Line.

"The current challenge is to rise from the tactical level to the strategic one - formulating a long-term vision for the Gaza Strip in order to enable advancement of Trump's plan and transition from

Phase 1 to subsequent phases that will include the reconstruction of Gaza, reopening of the Rafah crossing, entry of international and Palestinian forces into the Strip, disarmament of Hamas, establishing new parameters for IDF deployment in Gaza, and formulation of an alternative government in the Strip that does not include Hamas," he added.

"The meeting could also be an opportunity for Egypt to assess the Israeli position and explore solutions to the current impasse," said Ragheb.

Winter's emphasis on phased implementation echoes proposals circulating in Washington this month that outline demilitarization steps, monitored crossings, and a combined international-Palestinian stabilization presence under the US framework.

Rafah crossing remains pivotal with talks linking any reopening to ceasefire mechanics

On the ground, Rafah crossing remains pivotal, with talks linking any reopening to ceasefire mechanics, hostage deal timetables, and enduring security arrangements along the Philadelphi Corridor. Israel and Egypt are weighing options for surveillance, inspection and interdiction that both satisfy postwar realities and adhere to

treaty commitments.

Winter argued that Egypt and Israel must lock in “new and reliable security arrangements” for the Philadelphi Corridor and the movement of people and goods at Rafah, including technology upgrades and institutional mechanisms. He also raised the option of updating the Camp David military annex to allow adjusted force deployments on both sides of the border to rebuild trust:

“Israel believes that part of Hamas’s military buildup before Oct. 7 came from Egypt. Therefore, the challenge will be to formulate new and reliable security arrangements for monitoring the Philadelphi Corridor and for overseeing the passage of people and goods at the Rafah crossing,” Winter explained.

“This will require the use of appropriate technologies and establishment of mechanisms. It may also be appropriate to update the military annex to the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt in a way that will allow both armies to strengthen border security, formulate updated agreements regarding the deployment of military forces on both sides and rebuild the trust relations that were somewhat damaged during the war,” he added.

For Samir Ragheb, the Jerusalem visit fits Egypt’s broader playbook: keep diplomacy quiet, maintain leverage with all sides, and avoid inflaming domestic opinion while doing the hard work of de-escalation.

“The visit underscores Egypt’s multifaceted approach to regional diplomacy. By engaging in direct talks with Israeli leadership, Cairo aims to ease tensions, maintain open channels of communication and potentially pave the way for future initiatives,” Ragheb added.

“From my point of view, this discreet diplomatic channel may serve as an alternative to more public forums, allowing for frank discussions on sensitive issues,” he further added.

Winter called Egypt “an essential partner” for the day after, given the shared border, ties to Palestinian factions and international trust.

“Egypt is an essential partner of Israel in the day after the war, given its shared border with Gaza, its connections with the Palestinian factions, the trust placed in it by the international community and the US, and the roles it is designated to fulfill in the reconstruction processes and its implementation,” he said.

“Egypt’s diplomatic maneuvering reflects its efforts to maintain influence over regional security matters, particularly concerning the Gaza Strip and broader Palestinian issues,” Ragheb said.

“A renewed opening of the Rafah crossing will also strengthen Egypt’s leverage vis-à-vis Hamas. Unlike Qatar and Turkey, which are interested in Hamas’s survival as an influential factor in the Palestinian arena, Israel and Egypt also share the view that sees Hamas as a radical Islamist factor that endangers regional stability. On the other hand, they are still divided on the question of the Palestinian Authority’s (PA) return to Gaza,” Winter added.

For a durable reset, Winter said Israel’s priority is clear: demilitarize Gaza and disarm Hamas through close Egypt-Israel cooperation on border control and training an alternative Palestinian force - while Israel must, in turn, offer a credible political horizon, including conditions for a reformed PA in Gaza and progress toward a two-state framework.

“The top priority from Israel’s perspective is Egypt’s commitment to demilitarizing Gaza and disarming Hamas, and here close cooperation between the two countries will be required around border control, training of an alternative Palestinian force to Hamas, and taking the steps that will enable the exclusion of Hamas from government in the Gaza Strip,” Winter said.

“To gain Egypt’s full cooperation, Israel will be required on its part to create a credible political horizon - even if conditional and gradual - for the return of a reformed Palestinian Authority to Gaza and to create a political horizon for implementing the two-state framework,” he added.

Ragheb framed the same trade-offs through Cairo’s domestic lens.

“While security cooperation with Israel remains a sensitive topic domestically, such engagements signal Egypt’s commitment to playing an active role in regional affairs. As tensions persist and public summits face obstacles, this behind-the-scenes diplomacy may prove crucial in shaping the future of Middle Eastern politics and fostering stability in the region,” he said.

Both analysts see escalation risks if Israel advances steps Cairo defines as red lines.

“Escalation is expected if Israel returns to discussing or advancing plans that concern Egypt and are perceived by Cairo as a red line, particularly encouraging voluntary emigration of Gazans to Egypt or other countries, annexation of Palestinian territories, or a return to a full-scale war,” Winter said.

“By maintaining open channels with both Israeli and Arab leadership, Egypt can potentially broker agreements or defuse tensions that might otherwise escalate into larger conflicts. However, the success of this balancing act remains to be seen,” Ragheb said. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-871529>

OP ED

The Fall of a Black Lives Matter ‘Thugologist’

Thu, 23 Oct 2025 7:30 PM PST by Daniel Greenfield



When the Feds finally raided Cedric Dean’s mansion, out front were the words “Thug Mansion” and “Black Lives Matter”.

Inside the homes of the expert ‘Thugologist’ in North Carolina were the fruits of his hard work from allegedly defrauding Medicaid of millions and some ruder types speculate that the author of ‘How To Stop Your Children From Going To Prison’ may soon need a new chapter.

But the BLM adjacent activist has had a lot of chapters in his life that began when he was sent to prison for armed robbery at 16, then locked away for 105 years on charges of operating a crack ring until he was freed by pro-crime sentencing reforms that went easy on crack dealers.

But even while in prison, Dean had invented first ‘Deanism’, which promised to cure criminals, and ‘Thugology’, which claimed that being a thug was a medical condition. Relaying messages to be posted on Facebook from prison, Dean claimed that “we have available thugologists from every region of the country” who were “reformed federal prisoners who sincerely want to make amends” and are ready to “facilitate requests from parents and caregivers” of the thugs.

The NAACP even appointed him as the Executive Director of NAACP Prison Branch 5135.

“Sane Thug Therapy” was hailed as the solution for teaching thugs to “control their misguided thoughts” even while Dean denounced police for shooting criminals, complaining, “BLACK LIVES DON’T MATTER” to them. He published a book titled ‘Thugology’ and was hailed as an un-thuggish model prisoner and utterly reformed from his former thugological practices.

Reformed enough to jettison his ‘life without the possibility of parole’ sentence so that he could “devote himself full-time helping thugs and goons understand the forces behind their thuggery.”

Dean was out in 2018. Next year, Rep. Alma Adams invited him as her guest to President Trump’s State of the Union address to celebrate the ‘First Step Act’ and its release of criminals. Dean was working to help criminals reform and he told a reporter that “people can change.”

Soon he was billing himself as a “nationally recognized behavioral health expert”, “agitator”, a “violence interrupter and peacekeeper”, a minister, a “social justice expert”, an “entrepreneur”, a “community leader”, a “reentry expert”, a “motivational speaker”, an “educator” and virtually anything you can think of including an advocate for the homeless.

Also he appeared at anti-police protest rallies, recorded a rap video in a “Black Lives Matter” t-shirt with a black power fist, complained about “racial micro aggressions” and ran for city council while billing himself as a “Dedicated Democrat”.

But, like so many dedicated Dems, it’s “helping people” that got Cedric Dean in trouble.

Among the many organizations Dean created was the HELP Program: a supposed homeless shelter. He’s now accused of soliciting Medicaid ID numbers from people at homeless shelters and camps and using those to run up millions in charges for services that were never provided.

A few weeks after HELP took over a shelter, a woman and her 1-year-old [were found dead](#). Dean claimed however that they had already been dead when he got there. Residents complained that Dean was pressuring them to leave and [one confrontation](#) ended in his arrest. Another hotel [was shut down](#) by a fire marshal after an inspection found “open electrical boxes and wire splices”, [no smoke alarms](#) or fire extinguishers and a “burn barrel” in the backyard.

Cedric Dean Holdings billed \$14.5 million in services which, [according to the government’s](#) allegations, were “exorbitant amounts for services that the conspirators could not, within the bounds of space and time, provide; and conducted billing that was 894% more than the provider that submitted the second highest number of similar claims.” But the government may not understand that “space and time” are nothing to an expertly trained ‘Thugologist’.

The government alleges that the thugologist “billed Medicaid for approximately \$1 million of purportedly rendered services per month, but... did not offer any actual services.”

Assuming you don't count expert thugology as a service.

54 services were reportedly provided to someone who was deceased which is quite an accomplishment even for the most experienced thugologist who has a PhD in gooning.

The money however allegedly went to a good cause, "vehicles, jewelry and properties", which any self-respecting thugologist needs if he's going to convince thugs that there's a better way to live the thug life than shooting each other over some rock when they can just become social justice activists, start nonprofits and teach each other to stay out of prison by turning to fraud.

While billing taxpayers for millions.

The final verdict may still be out on 'thugology' or so much else. Their status, like that of Dean's Yukons and his Silverado seized by the feds, may be up in the air, but the real credit for all this goes to 'diversity champion' Claire Rauscher. The former federal public defender represented Dean when he was sentenced to life in prison and continued to work on his case, cutting his sentence down to 30 years, then to 24 years, and then he was out and going all sorts of places.

"He's doing remarkable things—I always knew he would," Rauscher, who has been awarded the title of Diversity Champion, gushed. "I'm really proud of Cedric."

Who wouldn't be?

The good news for Dean and Rauscher is that the diversity champion is now practicing in the area of 'white collar crime' and Medicaid is not a 'thug' crime, but a white collar crime.

Why break up the beautiful partnership between a thugologist and a diversity champion?

Daniel Greenfield is a *Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center*. This article previously appeared at the Center's *Front Page Magazine*.

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



BS"D

STEP BY STEP

STEP BY 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.

We are grateful that the school supply part of our effort has been successful.

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 can get the things they need.

Every week we are providing new sport shoes and eye exams/eyeglasses to the children on our request list. However, previous donations are rapidly dwindling. I am reaching out now before the fund has been emptied and we will have to say "no" to additional requests.

We work with two local shoe merchants who give Lev U'Neshama a discount but they advised us the cost of the shoes has increased. Also, we work with an accredited optician in town who also gives us a discount but his cost is stable.

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

Shoes: \$45 per pair regular and \$60 for First Steps, baby shoes.

Eye Exam/Eyeglasses: \$60 per child.

Your support is urgently requested.

You can send donations to:

East Texas Biblical Prophecy Forum which is a 501-3C ministry and receive a tax credit statement

Or use the Zelle US to US bank transfer system (contact me at mortsmo@aol.com for bank information).

US Donors may also send checks made payable to Simcha Smolensky, my son, who is also a volunteer.

Send to:

Rabbi Simcha Smolensky, 6739 N Mozart St Chicago IL 60645

Your support will be appreciated.

Yaffa Smolensky