

IDF officer killed in Gaza anti-tank missile attack

Capt. Avraham Ben Pinchas, 24, a platoon commander in the 401st Armored Brigade's 46th Battalion, from Harasha in the West Bank fell during operations in Rafah; Ben Pinchas suffered serious head injury during fighting in Gaza in October but recovered and returned to combat

Elisha Ben Kimon, Yoav Zitun | 13:16

The IDF reported that Capt. Avraham Ben Pinchas, 24, a platoon commander in the 401st Armored Brigade's 46th Battalion, from Harasha in the West Bank, was killed Saturday by a Hamas-fired anti-tank missile during an operation in Rafah, southern Gaza.

Ben Pinchas had previously suffered a serious head injury during fighting in Gaza in October but recovered and returned to combat. He leaves behind his parents and nine siblings.



Capt. Avraham Ben Pinchas (Photo: IDF)

Binyamin Regional Council head Israel Ganz mourned Ben Pinchas as "a heroic officer who led his soldiers in battle against the enemy in Gaza, aiming to destroy it and secure the return of hostages." Ganz noted the family's compounded tragedy, referencing the loss of Ben Pinchas' sister, Efrat Brener, in a car accident in 2020. "This is heartbreak upon heartbreak," he said, extending condolences to the family and Harasha community.

On Friday, the IDF reported that Nahal Brigade combat teams operating in Rafah discovered and destroyed a booby-trapped

tunnel shaft, along with significant caches of weapons, including mortar launchers, explosives and ammunition depots. The forces targeted a mortar-firing cell in a precision strike, according to military statements.



Nahal Brigade combat teams operating in Rafah (Photo: IDF)

Since the outbreak of the war, 808 Israeli soldiers have died, including 381 fatalities during the ground operations in Gaza.

Last week, the IDF reported the death of Staff Sgt. Zamir Burke, an engineering corps soldier killed by an anti-tank missile in Jabaliya. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/hjqntfznjx>

US increasingly worried that Iran is poised to build nukes, intel report says

Document says Tehran not currently building an atomic weapon, but uranium enrichment levels are near weapons-grade, existing stockpiles are enough for over a dozen nuclear warheads

By Tol Staff and Agencies Today, 6:54 pm

Members of the United States intelligence community are increasingly worried that Iran is moving toward the production of nuclear weapons, according to a report from the Office of the United States Director of National Intelligence (DNI) that was issued on Thursday.

First reported by The Wall Street Journal on Friday, the DNI document warns that "Iran now has enough fissile material to make more than a dozen nuclear weapons," but has not yet decided to do so.

"The Intelligence Community continues to assess that as of 26 September 2024, Iran is not building a nuclear weapon," the report stated, but added that it has "undertaken activities that better position it to

produce one, if it so chooses.”

The DNI report, titled “Assessment Regarding the Nuclear Activity of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” gave a broad intelligence assessment of Iran’s nuclear activities and capabilities from May to September this year, following up on an earlier report published in July.



Iran's domestically built centrifuges are displayed in an exhibition of the country's nuclear achievements, in Tehran, Iran, February 8, 2023. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

“Tehran has the infrastructure and experience to quickly produce weapons-grade uranium at multiple underground facilities, if it so chooses,” the DNI said, which **“bolsters the credibility of threats to develop nuclear weapons.”**

“Iran has continued to increase its stockpiles of 20-percent and 60-percent enriched uranium,” the report stated, citing levels that far exceed what would be necessary for

a civilian energy program, which is what Tehran claims its nuclear infrastructure is for.

A Western diplomatic source told Reuters on Saturday that the increase in the amount of uranium enriched to up to 60% purity is “extremely serious,” unjustified for civilian purposes and contradicts Tehran’s statements regarding credible nuclear negotiations.

“These measures have no credible civilian justification and could, on the contrary, directly fuel a military nuclear program if Iran were to take the decision,” the source said.

The **head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Mariano Grossi, warned Friday that Iran stands poised to “quite dramatically” increase its stockpile** of near-weapons-grade uranium as it has started cascades of advanced centrifuges.

The **DNI report also said that “Iran has the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in the region,”** and that recent progress with its satellite program would “shorten the timeline to produce an intercontinental ballistic missile” that could carry nuclear weapons.



A woman walks past a banner showing missiles being launched, in northern Tehran, Iran, April 19, 2024. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi, File)

Iran has always denied seeking nuclear weapons and says both its space program and nuclear activities are for purely civilian purposes. However, US intelligence agencies and the IAEA say Iran had an organized military nuclear program up until 2003, and continued to develop its nuclear program beyond civilian necessity. Israel contends that the Islamic Republic never truly abandoned its nuclear weapons program.

Iran is committed to Israel’s destruction. Over the past year, it has twice fired massive barrages of missiles at Israel, which has vowed to prevent Tehran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Israel has struck key Iranian military facilities in retaliation for both attacks, which came in the context of a multifront war opened by Iranian terror proxies on the Jewish state. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-increasingly-worried-that-iran-is-poised-to-build-nukes-intel-report-says/>

Israel assists UN forces in repelling rebel attack in southern Syria

Armed assailants attack UN outpost near village of Hader in Quneitra province, close to Israel's Golan Heights; rebels reportedly enter Homs and approach gates of Damascus

Lior Ben Ari, Yoav Zitun | 10:25

The IDF said Saturday it aided UN forces in repelling a rebel attack on a United Nations outpost near the Druze village of Hader in southern Syria's Quneitra province, close to the Golan Heights.

"A short while ago, an attack was carried out by armed individuals at a UN post in the Hader area in Syria," the military said in a statement. **"The IDF is currently assisting the UN forces in repelling the attack.**



Rebels announce the capture of Quneitra province near the Israeli border

"The IDF is deployed with reinforced forces in the Golan Heights area and will continue to operate in order to protect the State of Israel and its citizens."

The attacked UNDOF outpost, tasked with monitoring the 1974 Israel-Syria disengagement agreement, sits on a hill opposite Majdal Shams, just feet from the Israeli border. Israel's intervention was partly motivated by the

proximity of the Druze community in Hader, closely tied to residents of Majdal Shams across the border.

Israel **has a history of intervening in the area. Nearly a decade ago, the IDF acted to protect Hader against rebel advances**, preventing Israeli Druze from taking independent action. Israel had previously assured Majdal Shams' leaders it would step in to safeguard their Syrian relatives if necessary.

IDF bolsters troop deployment along the border with Syria

(Video: IDF)

The Golan Regional Council assured residents following gunfire heard in the area that "IDF forces stationed in the Golan are responsible for the activity," and emphasized that while there is "no immediate threat," the military has increased its presence.



IDF forces on Golan Heights, Saturday (Photo: Jalaa MAREY / AFP)

Meanwhile, the jihadist rebel group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), not currently operating near Israel's border, declared its responsibility to defend international institutions, including UN facilities, in Syria.

The IDF announced further troop reinforcements along the Golan Heights, involving infantry, armored and engineering battalions, to bolster defenses and prepare for possible escalation. Recent military exercises in northern Jordan Valley and southern Golan tested rapid response capabilities. Forces deployed during the drills have remained in the Golan to strengthen defenses.

"The IDF is closely monitoring developments, ready to respond to any scenario," a military spokesperson said on Friday, vowing to prevent threats near Israel's border and act against any danger to its citizens.

The development comes as rebel factions in Syria make rapid territorial gains in the south. [Rebels announced the capture of Quneitra province near the Israeli border](#), as well as the southern provinces of Sweida and Daraa.

Earlier Saturday, opposition groups reported taking control of Sanamayn, a city 20 kilometers (12 miles) from Damascus, after entering the birthplace of the 2011 uprising, Daraa, last weekend.

The offensive, spearheaded by HTS and joined by other factions, began with [surprise attacks on Assad regime forces](#) in northern provinces, including [Aleppo and Idlib](#). HTS leader Abu Mohammed al-Golani told CNN, "Our goal is to [topple the regime by any means necessary](#)."



Rebel fighters on the outskirts of Homs, Syria (Photo: REUTERS/Mahmoud Hasano)



(Photo: REUTERS/Mahmoud Hasano)



(Photo: REUTERS/Mahmoud Hasano)



(Photo: REUTERS/Mahmoud Hasano)

Rebel forces have since seized key cities in central Syria. After capturing Aleppo, the country's second-largest city, they advanced southward, taking Hama and pushing into Homs, Syria's third-largest city and a crucial crossroads connecting many provinces. Pro-Assad forces have launched airstrikes and dispatched reinforcements to Homs, but analysts suggest the fall of the city could be a turning point threatening the regime's survival.

Meanwhile, opposition reports indicate that rebels are within a few miles of Damascus, with some claiming they are "at the gates of the capital." Pro-regime sources denied rebel forces were near the capital but confirmed withdrawals from surrounding towns.

In the east, Kurdish rebels reportedly captured Deir ez-Zor and the Iraqi border crossing at Al-Bukamal. Local officials in Iraq said approximately 2,000 Syrian soldiers fled to Iraq seeking asylum, with some requiring medical attention.



Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (Photo: The White Helmets/Handout via REUTERS, AP)

In Damascus, rumors circulated about President Bashar al-Assad's departure amid rebel advances. His office dismissed such claims, stating he remains in the capital performing his duties. Nonetheless, reports suggest Egyptian and Jordanian officials have urged Assad to leave Syria and establish a government-in-exile. A Wall Street Journal report claims Assad's wife, Asma, and their children left for Russia last week.

In southern Syria, footage emerged of protesters in Jaramana, a predominantly Druze city 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Damascus, toppling a statue of Hafez al-Assad, Bashar's father.



Demonstrators called for the regime's downfall, and security forces were deployed to protect government buildings.

Rebels topple statue of Hafez al-Assad in Damascus suburbs

The foreign ministers of Russia, Iran and Turkey met on Saturday to reaffirm the importance of Syria's territorial integrity and agreed to renew efforts toward a political resolution to the ongoing crisis. The meeting highlighted the complex alliances in the Syrian conflict: Turkey supports certain rebel factions, while Russia and Iran back the Assad regime.

Russian aircraft continue to conduct airstrikes against rebels across Syria, and pro-Iranian militias have entered the country following the recent surprise offensive.

A source close to Hezbollah revealed that the group, recovering from a year of fighting with Israel, has deployed 2,000 fighters to Syria to support Assad's forces in battles against the rebels.

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Saturday ruled out intervention in the Syrian conflict. "Syria is a mess, but is not our friend, & THE UNITED STATES SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. THIS IS NOT OUR FIGHT. LET IT PLAY OUT. DO NOT GET INVOLVED!" he wrote on his social media platform Truth Social, ahead of his January 20 inauguration. Currently, approximately 900 U.S. troops remain stationed in Syria.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/r1i1mgge1g#autoplay>

Syrian rebels make significant gains toward Damascus, near Israeli border

While the rebel factions have deep political divisions, their united goal in toppling the Al-Assad regime is the driving force behind this lightning offensive.



By [SETH J. FRANTZMAN](#) DECEMBER 7, 2024 14:31 **Updated:**
DECEMBER 7, 2024 17:41

A rebel fighter sits on the back of a vehicle in Homs countryside, after Syrian rebels pressed on in their lightning advance on Saturday. (photo credit: REUTERS/Mahmoud Hasano)

Syrian rebel groups have made major advances against the Syrian regime in southern Syria over the last two days. Many of these rebel groups who once operated near Dara'a in southern Syria near the Jordanian border had reconciled with the Syrian regime.

This reconciliation did not always go smoothly because a low-level insurgency continued since 2018 when the groups laid down their arms. This has important ramifications for Israel because the groups [operate not far from the Golan border](#).

The **rebel groups appeared to retake control of much of the area they controlled back in 2018 over a 48-hour period from December 6 to 7** in southern Syria. This is a large area that includes the Jordanian border, the city of Dara'a and the countryside around it. The groups are reportedly also moving into areas near Quneitra near the border with Israel. The rebel groups here are often called the Southern Operations Room of the Syrian Rebellion.

Levant24 noted that "Syrian revolution forces, led by the Southern Operations Room and the Command of Military Operations (CMO), have made sweeping territorial gains across multiple provinces, including Hama, Homs, and Daraa, as they push towards Damascus in their effort to topple the Assad regime. The developments signal a turning point in the ongoing conflict, with regime forces reportedly retreating under pressure and civilian resistance bolstering the revolution."

The **situation is changing rapidly**. Rebel groups continue to take areas in Dara'a province. This is symbolically important because the Syrian rebellion began here back in 2011. Throughout part of the Syrian civil war, these groups received some support from Jordan and the West.

People walk past a damaged site in Aleppo, after the Syrian army said that dozens of its soldiers had been killed in a major attack by rebels who swept into the city, in Syria November 30, 2024. (credit: REUTERS/MAHMOUD HASSANO)

Rapid progress made

However, they eventually surrendered in 2018 and were reconciled with the Syrian regime.

Some of the forces joined Syrian army units. As the rebels have advanced, it appears some of the forces had the chance to leave their Syrian army units and rejoin the rebellion, having been only tacitly "reconciled" with the regime. For instance, the Syrian regime's 9th division received a large number of reconciled fighters, according to a study from Middle East Institute. Reports that a base of the regime's 34th Brigade, which is part of the division, fell to rebels on December 7 might indicate that reconciled units simply melted away from this division.

It is not clear what has become of the Russian-backed 5th Corps, which had been active in southern Syria. This **corps has been the center of numerous controversies since 2018**. The Syrian regime forces in southern Syria appear to have collapsed completely. The Syrian-Jordanian border is 233 miles long. It appears the rebels in Dara'a have already taken more than 100 miles of this border. The rest consists of open desert.



Jordan sees these developments as a sensitive issue. The kingdom closed its Nassib crossing with Syria on December 6. There was a Jordanian border crossing near Ramtha, although it is apparently closed. Reports on December 7 indicated that the rebels had seen so much success in Dara'a that they want to march on Damascus, which is around 100km north of Dara'a.

Another key part of the border area with Jordan is the Druze area of southern Syria centered on Suwayda. This is an **area called Hauran that includes Jabal al-Druze**, or the Druze mountain region. **Druze rebelled here against the**

Ottomans in 1909 and against the French in the 1920s. **There was a Druze state here in 1921. Therefore, the Druze area has a history of a desire for autonomy.** Around fifty miles to the east of the Druze area is another key area that is important for the rebellion against the regime. This is the area of US-backed Syrian rebels around Tanf base. The base is a US garrison that dates back eight years in Syria and was supposed to train rebels to fight ISIS. The group being trained is called the Maghawir al-Thawra, or MaT for short. It is called the Revolutionary Commando Army in English but is also called the Syria Free Army.

Importance of offensive

What matters for our purposes is not the name but the progress the group made recently. It had been in an area called Tanf in the desert near the Jordanian-Iraq border. This area had a 55km zone around it, basically a half circle, that the US kept the regime out of. The regime had attacked this area with drones, and Kataib Hezbollah even targeted an area in Jordan called Tower 22 near here, killing three American personnel in January 2024. Now, the shoe is on the other foot, and these rebel groups have burst out of Tanf and headed toward Palmyra. They also reportedly took a strategic mountain called Gharab near the Iraqi border. **Shaam online media said that "the Free Syrian Army factions in the Al-Tanf area announced today, Saturday, December 7, 2024, the start of their military movement in the Syrian Badia region** east of Homs, and launching attacks against regime positions, in parallel with the battles taking place on the outskirts of the northern city of Homs, and the exit of the Daraa and Sweida governorates from the control of the regime, in a scene that seems to lead to tightening the noose and imposing a comprehensive siege on the center of the capital, Damascus."

The offensive by the rebel group from Tanf is important as it cuts off the Iranian-backed movement from Albukamal toward Palmyra and also toward other bases in the desert called T3, T4, and T2. T4, or Tiyas base, was a key base for the Russians and Iranians.

The Iranians even tried to fly a Khorded air defense system into that base in April 2018.

Albukamal, on the Syrian border with Iraq, is important because Kataib Hezbollah once had a base there until a June 2018 airstrike. Iran then built a base called Imam Ali near there. Now it appears the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces have taken Albukamal as well as Deir Ezzor. This apparently caused the Syrian regime to also

flee Palmyra in the desert.

It's hard to understand all these moves without familiarity with all these places. What's important to think about is that the Syrian regime's strength lies in Damascus and also a line of cities such as Homs and Hama, Aleppo, and the area of Lattakia. The regime also held Deir Ezzor during the ISIS war when it was under siege from 2014-2017. The rapid collapse of the regime in these areas is fascinating because, in many cases, it had held and fought for these areas, such as Dara'a, for years. Now, it has collapsed in just hours in many of these areas.

One **has to imagine now that the regime is losing ground in the north from the [Hayat Tahrir al-Sham \(HTS\) offensive](#)** that began around November 27. HTS took Aleppo and then Hama. Now, it may take Homs. The SDF has caught the regime by surprise, taking areas near Deir Ezzor and Albukamal. The formerly reconciled Syrian rebels of the Southern Operations area have retaken Dara'a province six years after they lost it in 2018. The rebels at Tanf have moved toward Palmyra and secured key areas of the desert.

The **Druze have taken parts of the Hauran. This represents a series of moves that could encircle Damascus.** The factions don't necessarily all get along. The SDF and HTS are from different ends of the political spectrum, one a left leaning movement rooted in part in the Kurdish parts of northeast Syria, and one a religious movement rooted in Islam and moving from Idlib in northwest Syria. The rebels in the south are all historic rebels who date back to 2011 in varying ways. They are very different than the SDF or HTS. There are also Arab tribal elements and the Druze. The fact that the Assad regime alienated all these groups shows how weak it is. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-832357>

Moscow, Tehran and Ankara want immediate end to fighting in Syria, Russia's FM says
The guarantors of the Astana format pledged their continued support for Syria's unity at a meeting in Doha.
By REUTERS DECEMBER 7, 2024 15:28 Updated: DECEMBER 7, 2024 18:16



Officials, including Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, attend a meeting on the crisis in Syria in the framework of the Astana process on the sidelines of the Doha Forum in Doha, Qatar, December 7, 2024. (photo credit: RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Saturday that he and the foreign ministers of Turkey and Iran had agreed in a meeting in Doha that there had to be an immediate end to "hostilities" in Syria.

Lavrov said Moscow wanted to see dialog between the Syrian government and what he called the "[legitimate opposition](#)" in Syria.

He said the Islamist insurgent group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) were "terrorists" regardless of whether they said they had changed their views.

"It's inadmissible to allow the terrorist group to take control of the lands in violation of agreements," the Russian diplomat said.



Rebel fighters ride a vehicle, after rebels led by HTS have sought to capitalize on their swift takeover of Aleppo in the north and Hama in west-central Syria by pressing onwards to Homs, in Hama, Syria December 6, 2024. (credit: REUTERS/Mahmoud Hasano)

Astana format backs Syrian unity

Asked how the situation in Syria would develop and what would happen to Russian military bases there, Lavrov said he was "not in the business of guessing."

Lavrov added that extremism will breed in the Middle East unless a Palestinian state is created.

Additionally, the importance of restarting the Syrian political process was stressed at the same

meeting, a Turkish foreign ministry source said, adding that the meeting was constructive.

"Support for Syria's territorial integrity and political unity was declared" at the meeting, attended by the countries' foreign ministers in what is known as the Astana format.

Terrorist sporting ISIS insignia shot dead after firing at West Bank checkpoint

The terrorist reportedly arrived at the Qalandiya checkpoint armed with a knife and fired fireworks at security forces operating there.

By *JERUSALEM POST STAFF* DECEMBER 7, 2024 10:08 **Updated:** DECEMBER 7, 2024 17:44



A shirt bearing ISIS insignia, found on a terrorist who attempted to carry out a terror attack in Qalandiya, the West Bank, December 7, 2024. (photo credit: Police Spokesperson)

Security forces thwarted an attempted terror attack at the Qalandiya checkpoint in the West Bank on Saturday morning, neutralizing a terrorist wearing a shirt with ISIS insignia, the Israel Police stated.

The terrorist reportedly arrived at the Qalandiya checkpoint armed with a knife and fired fireworks at security forces operating there. In response, a civilian security guard

opened fire, neutralizing the terrorist.

The Israel Police and Border Police were dispatched to the scene, Israeli media noted. No wounded were reported.

During an inspection, a knife was found on the assailant, and he was wearing a shirt bearing the insignia of the ISIS terrorist organization, the police stated.

Israeli soldiers guard while Palestinians wait at a checkpoint between Nablus and Qalqilya in the West Bank, following a terror shooting attack, July 25, 2024. (credit: NASSER ISHTAYEH/FLASH90)



The police said that the attacker's identity and the circumstances of the attempted attack are under investigation.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-832333>

Man severely wounded in West Bank car-ramming attack, IDF in pursuit of assailant

Nearby civilian vehicle struck by gunfire, lightly injuring 45-year-old man with glass shards; medics treat two additional passengers, a man and a child, for shock

A man in his 30s was seriously wounded Saturday evening in a car-ramming attack near Al-Fawar, south of the West Bank city of Hebron.

He was **evacuated to Soroka Medical Center in Be'er Sheva** with leg injuries, according to the IDF and medics.

Footage from car-ramming attack near Hebron, West Bank

The assailant fled the scene, and Israeli forces have launched a manhunt, the military said. A civilian vehicle in the area was struck by gunfire, lightly injuring a 45-year-old man with glass shards. Medics treated two additional passengers, a man and a child, for shock.



Magen David Adom (MDA) paramedics and IDF medical personnel arrived on-site following a call to MDA's Negev emergency line. They stabilized the seriously wounded victim before transferring him to the hospital.

Emergency teams at scene of car-ramming attack near Hebron, West Bank

This incident follows a shooting attack last Friday near the Gitai Avisar Junction close to Ariel in the West Bank. Nine people were wounded, one critically, when a gunman opened fire on a bus traveling from Ariel to Tel Aviv.

The attacker, who wore a tactical vest, was neutralized at the scene. Among the injured was bus driver Hassan Alsakhan, who sustained critical wounds after being struck by six bullets through the windshield. He was rushed to Rabin Medical Center in Petah Tikva, where doctors managed to stabilize his condition.
<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/skroxzmeyx#autoplay>

Hamas publishes propaganda video of Israeli hostage Matan Zangauker

Zangauker, held in Gaza for over 420 days, appears in a video—likely scripted by his captors—criticizing Netanyahu and voicing fears for his life

Einav Halabi, Yael Ciechanover, Dan Raban|09:39

Hamas on Saturday released a video showing Israeli hostage Matan Zangauker, held captive in Gaza for over 420 days since being abducted during the terrorist group's October 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel.

In the footage, Zangauker, whose words may have been dictated by his captors, criticizes Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying, "I am very disappointed. I am now sure you don't understand your enemies or their intentions. This is your failure and that of your government since October 7."

Hamas propaganda video of Israeli hostage Matan Zangauker

He adds that he and fellow hostages fear for their lives following new directives reportedly conveyed by their captors. Expressing despair, he urged Israelis to protest outside Netanyahu's residence, saying, "We suffer every day. It's time you felt our suffering too."

Zangauker spoke directly to his mother, Einav, a prominent advocate for the hostages, saying, "I watch you, I hear about your actions, and I hope to sit with you again at the table, to eat, talk and drink together."



He described dire conditions in captivity, including lack of food, water and hygiene, living among rats and other animals. "The isolation is killing us, and the darkness is terrifying. It's not fair we pay for the government's mistakes."

Matan Zangauker

Zangauker's partner, Ilana Gritzewsky, was also abducted but released in a hostage deal in November last year. His family authorized the release of the video but noted that statements made were likely dictated by Hamas.

A week earlier, Hamas released another video featuring Edan Alexander, an American-Israeli hostage, who appealed to U.S. President-elect Donald Trump to secure his release.

Alexander criticized U.S. military aid to Israel, claiming, "The weapons Biden sends are killing us," and added, "I don't want to die like Hersh, another American friend," referring to [former hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin](#), who was abducted during the October 7 massacre and later [executed by his captors along with five other hostages](#).

Addressing his family, Alexander said, "Every day feels like eternity. Please stay strong; it's only a matter of time before this nightmare ends." <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/h1zoqkgvyx#autoplay>

Qatar's PM confirms resumption of Gaza mediation role, cites fresh momentum for deal



Al Thani says there's been 'a lot of encouragement from the incoming administration to achieve a deal,' even before Trump's term starts

By [Agencies](#) and [Tel Staff](#) Today, 1:26 pm

Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani arrives for a meeting with Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani at 10 Downing Street in central London, on December 4, 2024 (JUSTIN TALLIS / AFP)

Confirming Qatar's return to mediation between Hamas and Israel, the Gulf nation's prime minister said Saturday that momentum had returned to talks aimed at cementing a truce and hostage exchange deal in Gaza following the election of Donald Trump as US president.

"We have sensed, after the election, that the momentum is coming back," Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani told the Doha Forum for political dialogue, adding there had been "a lot of encouragement from the incoming administration in order to achieve a deal, even before the president comes to the office."

This, he said, had affected the Qatari decision to get talks "back on track" over the last two weeks.

"We hope to get things done as soon as possible. We hope that the willingness of the parties to engage in good faith continues," he said.

Steve Witkoff, Trump's incoming Middle East envoy, recently traveled to Qatar and Israel in order to kickstart efforts, while a source familiar with the matter confirmed to The Times of Israel that Doha had quietly resumed its role as a mediator at the behest of officials from Trump's transition team.

The Gulf emirate, along with the United States and Egypt, had been involved in months of unsuccessful negotiations for a Gaza truce and hostage release after 14 months of war.

But Qatar booted the Hamas leaders in late October, with Biden administration officials telling The Times of Israel that they requested Doha order their expulsion due to the terror group's months-long refusal to constructively engage in negotiations on a ceasefire and hostage release deal. Qatar maintains that the decision to oust Hamas officials was one it made on its own, framing the move as part of a decision to temporarily halt its mediation efforts, which it vowed to only resume when both sides demonstrate willingness to negotiate in good faith.

From Qatar, the Hamas leaders fled to Turkey, which also has close ties to the Palestinian terror group, though the Biden administration quickly spoke out against Ankara's decision to allow them in.

The Qatari prime minister also brushed off the prospect of Qatar facing greater pressure over the status of its political bureau for Hamas, which the Gulf state has hosted since 2012 with the blessing of the United States. He called the office a "platform to convene between the different parties," adding that Qatar was not "expected to enforce solutions" on the Palestinian terrorists.



From L to R: Hamas West Bank leader Zaher Jabarin, the chairman of the group's consultative council Mohammed Ismail Darwish, known as Abu Omar Hassan, and senior official Khaled Mashaal receive condolences during the funeral of the terror group's top leader Ismail Haniyeh in the Qatari capital Doha on August 2, 2024. (Mahmud Hams/AFP)

Al Thani explained that while there were "some differences" in the approach to an agreement by the outgoing and incoming US administrations, "we didn't see or recognize any disagreement on the goal itself to end the war."

London-based Arabic newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat reported, meanwhile, that Hamas had begun efforts to check the status of hostages held by other terror groups in Gaza, as it expected potential movement on a hostage and ceasefire deal with Israel.

Palestinian sources cited by the paper said Hamas officials had contacted other groups to receive updates on the condition of hostages they hold.

Israel says 100 hostages remain in Gaza. Media reports in Israel have indicated that some half are believed to be alive.

Also Saturday, a source close to Hamas negotiators told AFP that a new round of talks could "most likely" begin in the coming week in Cairo.



Ambulances transporting wounded Palestinians drive on the main Salah al-Din road in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip on December 4, 2024. (Omar Al-Qattaa/AFP)

“Based on the contacts with the mediators, we expect a new round of negotiations to begin in Cairo most likely this week to discuss ideas and proposals for a ceasefire and an exchange of prisoners,” the source said on condition of anonymity, referring to the release of hostages in return for Israel freeing hundreds of convicted terrorists.

“The Egyptians, Qataris, Turks and other parties are making commendable efforts to end the war,” the source said.

Trump told Netanyahu over the summer that if he won the election, he wanted the war in Gaza wrapped up by the time he returned to office, two sources familiar with the matter [told](#) The Times of Israel.

That message has intensified since Trump’s election victory and was apparently passed along by Trump’s newly appointed envoy Witkoff.

“We had heard this from his team... that they want this to be resolved now — today, even,” Al Thani told Sky News on Wednesday.

One source told The Times of Israel that the return of Hamas officials was only temporary in the context of the new hostage negotiation effort.



After brokering a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah last week, the Biden administration maintained that deal left Hamas isolated and potentially more willing to compromise in hostage negotiations. The US said it was launching another effort to secure a deal alongside Egypt, Qatar and Turkey.

Troops of the 401st Armored Brigade operate in northern Gaza’s Jabalia, in a handout photo published by the military on December 4, 2024. (Israel Defense Forces)

Earlier this week, aides to Netanyahu told reporters that Egypt had crafted a new proposal that had them increasingly optimistic. They pointed to a fiery threat made by Trump on social media in which

he warned of “hell to pay” in the Middle East if all hostages were not released by his inauguration, and they argued that Hamas was facing unprecedented pressure to compromise.

Netanyahu’s aides said the Egyptian proposal envisioned a temporary ceasefire and was largely the same as the first phase of the three-phase framework that the mediators had been pushing for months.

However, rather than the 40- to 60-day initial ceasefire being followed up with another two phases that included a permanent end to the war, this latest Egyptian proposal would allow Israel to resume fighting after it ends, rather than having to effectively commit up-front to a permanent ceasefire, the Netanyahu aides said.

But an Israeli official familiar with the talks and an Arab diplomat told The Times of Israel that no such Egyptian proposal exists and that what Netanyahu’s aides discussed was actually a new Israeli proposal that was passed along to Egypt.

The Israeli and Arab officials say that the chances that the Netanyahu-backed proposal will succeed are very low because Hamas won’t budge from its refusal to release the hostages unless Israel agrees to end the war and withdraw its troops from Gaza in exchange.

Egypt would not craft a proposal that doesn’t lead to a permanent ceasefire, the Arab diplomat said.

Netanyahu has vowed he will not agree to proposals that require Israel to permanently end the war in exchange for the release of the remaining hostages. His far-right coalition partners have threatened to collapse the coalition if he does so, with some of them concerned it will allow for Hamas’s revival while others appear to fear it will prevent them from moving forward with their desire to re-establish settlements in Gaza.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/qatars-pm-confirms-resumption-of-gaza-mediation-role-cites-renewed-momentum-for-deal/>

Saudi royal says Israel ‘genocidal,’ hopes Netanyahu will be brought before ICC

Speaking in Bahrain, Prince Turki Al Faisal also calls on Trump to bring peace to Middle East, citing his 'strong mandate' from American voters

By [Agencies](#) and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 2:36 pm



Saudi Prince Turki al-Faisal talks to The Associated Press in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. (AP Photo/Kamran Jebreili, 2018 file photo)

MANAMA, Bahrain – A senior Saudi royal termed Israel “genocidal” and an “apartheid” state on Saturday, and also that he hoped Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would be brought before the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Speaking at the Manama Dialogue conference in Bahrain, Prince Turki Al Faisal, Saudi Arabia’s intelligence chief for over two decades, also called on incoming US President-elect Donald Trump to

bring peace to the Middle East.

His comments follow increasingly tough statements from Saudi officials since talks were paused on a potential normalization of ties with Israel after the start of the Gaza war.

“Israel today, according to international human rights groups, is not only an apartheid colonial state, but it is also a genocidal one,” Prince Turki said.

“It is committing genocide on the people of Gaza.”

He added: “It’s about time for the world to... take the necessary steps to bring those who are charged by the International Criminal Court to justice.”

The ICC’s judges issued the warrants last month for Netanyahu and former defense minister Yoav Gallant on charges that Israel has targeted civilians in its war against Hamas in Gaza and used starvation as a method of war — both claims vehemently denied by Israel.

Israel is also not a member of the ICC, has firmly rejected the allegations against it and its leaders, and has rejected the court’s jurisdiction.

Saudi’s de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, also accused Israel of genocide, at a joint Arab League and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation summit in Riyadh last month.

He told Arab and Muslim leaders gathered to press for the establishment of a Palestinian state that the kingdom renewed “its condemnation and categorical rejection of the genocide committed by Israel against the brotherly Palestinian people, which has claimed the lives of 150,000 martyrs, wounded and missing, most of whom are women and children.”



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman addressing the joint extraordinary leaders summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League in Riyadh, in a handout picture provided by the Saudi Press Agency SPA on November 11, 2024. (Ahmed NURELDINE / SPA / AFP)

Amnesty International leveled the same charge of genocide this week in a new [report](#) that was dismissed by Israel as “fabricated” and “based on lies.” It was also dismissed by the organization’s local branch, Amnesty Israel, and by Germany and the US.

The war in Gaza erupted after Hamas’s October 7 massacre, which saw some 3,000 terrorists burst across the border into Israel by land, air and sea, killing some 1,200 people and seizing 251 hostages, mostly civilians, many amid acts of brutality and sexual assault.

The Hamas-run Gaza health ministry says more than 44,000 people in the Strip have been killed or are presumed dead in the fighting so far, though the toll cannot be verified and does not differentiate between civilians and fighters. Israel says it has killed some 18,000 combatants in battle as of November and another 1,000 terrorists inside Israel on October 7.

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

Advertisement

Prince Turki, also a former Saudi ambassador to the US, said Trump's "strong mandate" from American voters "could enable him to provide the statesmanship that is highly needed in the world."



US President Donald Trump, left, speaks with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during a family photo session at G-20 leaders summit in Osaka, Japan, June 28, 2019. (Kim Kyung-Hoon/Pool Photo via AP)

"Friendly countries in the region are hoping that Mr. Trump pursues what he started before, to bring peace with capital letters to the Middle East," he said.

"It is time for America, under your presidency, to change the course of this troubled region," he added.

Bahrain, and Morocco signed the Abraham Accords recognizing Israel, a break with the long-held Arab consensus that there should be no ties without the creation of a Palestinian state.

However, Riyadh has also moved to patch up ties with Iran after a March 2023 rapprochement deal brokered by China, reshaping the diplomatic landscape. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/saudi-royal-says-israel-genocidal-hopes-netanyahu-will-be-brought-before-icc/>

IDF says it killed Hamas officers involved in Oct. 7 glider infiltration, massacres

Military denies reports it struck, stormed Kamal Adwan Hospital, after 29 said killed and dozens injured at one of north Gaza's last functioning hospitals

By [Emanuel Fabian](#), [Tol Staff](#) and [Agencies](#) 6 December 2024, 10:05 pm



Troops of the 401st Armored Brigade operate in northern Gaza's Jabalia, in a handout photo published by the military on December 4, 2024. (Israel Defense Forces)

The IDF and Shin Bet said Friday that several senior Hamas commanders were killed in recent Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, including a leader who masterminded the terror group's use of paragliders to infiltrate Israel on October 7, 2023.

The military also denied allegations that Israeli forces had targeted north Gaza's Kamal Adwan Hospital, amid Palestinian allegations that 29 people were killed there.

The military said Nidal al-Najjar, the commander of Hamas's aerial forces in Gaza City, was killed in an airstrike Tuesday.

According to the IDF, al-Najjar was among the masterminds behind Hamas's aerial infiltration of Israel on October 7, 2023, when terrorists in paragliders flew over the border into the south, part of a force that killed some 1,200 people and took 251 hostages.

During the ensuing war, al-Najjar was responsible for Hamas's air defenses and carried out

explosive-laden drone attacks against troops operating in Gaza, the IDF said.

Majdi Aqilan, a company commander and deputy commander in Hamas's Gaza City-based Shati Battalion, was also killed in an airstrike over the past week, the military said.

During the October 7 onslaught, Aqilan was one of the commanders who led the massacre and hostage-taking at Kibbutz Nahal Oz, according to the military.

The destruction caused by Hamas terrorists in Kibbutz Nahal Oz, near the Israeli-Gaza border, in southern Israel, October 20, 2023. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)



The **strike also killed Mamdouh Mehna, the military said. According to the IDF, Mehna was a senior tunnel specialist in Hamas's Gaza City Brigade, and had also participated in the massacre in Nahal Oz.**

Ahmed Suwaidan, a company commander in the Shati Battalion, was also killed in the strike, the army said. Suwaidan was involved in abducting Israeli civilians and taking them to Gaza during the Hamas onslaught, according to the IDF.

The army added that the Hamas operatives were also involved in attacks on Israel and troops in Gaza throughout the war.



Dozens said killed at Kamal Adwan, IDF denies targeting hospital

The IDF denied reports it had struck or raided the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Jabalia, saying it had been operating near the facility.

The area has been the site of an intense IDF operation aiming to stop Hamas from regrouping in northern Gaza for the past two months.

People check the damage outside the Kamal Adwan hospital in the northern Gaza Strip, December 6, 2024. (AFP)

“Contrary to the reports made over the past day, the [military] did not strike the Kamal Adwan hospital or operate within it,” the IDF said in a statement, adding that it would “continue to operate against terror infrastructure and terrorists” in northern Gaza, including “adjacent to” the hospital.

The statement came after the Hamas-run territory's civil defense agency said 29 people were killed and dozens wounded on Friday by Israeli strikes around the hospital, one of north Gaza's last functioning health centers.

Mahmud Bassal, the agency's spokesman, said Israeli troops had entered the hospital, evacuated patients and arrested several Palestinians.

A representative for the World Health Organization told reporters that Israeli troops were first spotted outside the hospital at 4 a.m. and that the hospital was bombed despite there being “no official evacuation order.” The representative said a “substantial amount” of people, including patients and staff, were still in the hospital, which remained “minimum operational.”

According to Hossam Abu Safieh, the hospital's director, “There was a series of airstrikes on the northern and western sides of the hospital, accompanied by intense and direct fire.”

He added that four staff were killed and there were no surgeons left at the site.



Ambulances transporting wounded Palestinians drive on the main Salah al-Din road in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip on December 4, 2024. (Omar Al-Qattaa/AFP)

Reports of the strikes at Kamal Adwan came just days after the World Health Organization said an emergency medical team had reached the hospital for the first time in 60 days.

Dr. Faradina Sulistiyani, a surgeon on the team, told AFP from Gaza City that all seven of her team members had left the premises on foot as the bombing went on.

Israeli forces have raided Kamal Adwan on several occasions since the start of the war. The

hospital said its intensive care unit director Ahmad al-Kahlut was killed in an airstrike late last month.

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

Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry said only 37 hospitals and clinics in the war-devastated territory remained operational but lacked essential equipment, manpower, and medical and fuel supplies.

The three main hospitals on the enclave's northern end are barely functioning and have been under repeated attack since Israel sent tanks into Beit Lahiya and nearby Beit Hanoun and Jabalia in October, the ministry said.

Large parts of northern Gaza have been cut off from aid as the IDF operates in those areas against Hamas insurgencies. Most of the civilians there have evacuated but thousands remain under dire conditions.



A truck delivering flour to Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza on December 6, 2024. (COGAT)

Amid the operation, COGAT, the IDF body responsible for humanitarian coordination in Gaza, said it had helped transport thousands of bags of flour to Beit Hanoun.

According to the Hamas health ministry, over 44,000 Palestinians have been killed in the war. The figure, which cannot be independently verified, does not distinguish between civilians and combatants. Israel says it killed some 18,000 gunmen in Gaza as of November, in addition to 1,000 inside Israel during the Hamas onslaught.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-it-killed-hamas-officers-involved-in-oct-7-glider-infiltration-massacres/>

Russian-Syrian airstrikes kill dozens of terrorists – media

Warplanes have attacked militant forces in central Syria, SANA has reported



FILE PHOTO: Thick columns of smoke were seen rising over the city of Aleppo, following a series of airstrikes conducted by Syrian warplanes. © Rami Alsayed / NurPhoto via Getty Images

Russian and Syrian warplanes have carried out airstrikes targeting terrorist forces in the northeast part of Homs province, killing dozens of militants, the state-run SANA news agency has said.

The large-scale fighting in Syria erupted last week after several terrorist groups, spearheaded by Hayat Tahrir-al-

Sham (HTS), an offshoot of Jabhat al-Nusra, launched a surprise offensive against government forces. The jihadists have made rapid progress, particularly in Aleppo province, and the Syrian army has withdrawn from the city of Hama. However, the Damascus government has received support from Russian warplanes stationed in the country.

In a post on Telegram on Saturday, the outlet said, citing a military source, that the joint “concentrated” bombardment targeted clusters of terrorists in the Homs countryside. The attacks killed “dozens” of jihadists and destroyed their vehicles and equipment, the report said, without providing the exact tally.

According to SANA, Syrian forces operating in Hama and Homs also carried out “intensive artillery and missile fire” on the militants and their supply lines, “scoring direct hits.”

The Syrian military has also announced that its troops operating in the Daraa and Suwayda regions in the south of the country have been redeployed, and “established a strong and cohesive defensive cordon” to repel terrorist attacks on checkpoints. The military described the raids as attempts to divert Damascus’ attention from Homs and Hama.

Syrian media reports have claimed that the Damascus forces have destroyed a total of 2,500 terrorists, with the help of Russian air support.

President Bashar Assad has vowed to “eliminate terrorists” who attacked the country as well as to punish their “sponsors and supporters,” amid media reports that militants received training from Ukrainian military intelligence.

Earlier this week, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov also suggested that the HTS offensive could be supported by the US and the UK, adding that Moscow is working with Türkiye and Iran to stabilize the situation.

<https://www.rt.com/news/608882-syria-russia-war-planes/>

Oreshnik missile deal a response to US move – Belarus military chief

Earlier this year Washington announced that it would once again station intermediate-range missiles in Europe

7 Dec, 2024 18:32

The **decision to deploy Russia's new Oreshnik hypersonic missiles in Belarus is a direct response to US plans to station medium-range missiles in Germany**, Minsk's Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Sergey Lagodyuk told BelTA news agency on Saturday.

Russian **President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko signed a security treaty on Friday, allowing both countries to use all forces and means at their disposal**. After the meeting, Putin said that Oreshnik missile systems could be stationed in Belarus as early as the second half of next year, depending on how soon they enter regular service with Russia's strategic forces.

"The decision to deploy Oreshnik missile systems in the territory of the Republic of Belarus has been made in response to the steps being taken by the United States and Germany to deploy medium-range missiles in Europe," Lagodyuk said.

During **a NATO summit in July, Washington and Berlin announced that the multipurpose Standard Missile-6 (SM-6), the Tomahawk land-attack cruise missile, and a hypersonic missile still in development would be stationed in Wiesbaden, Germany from 2026 onwards**.

SM-6 missiles have a range of up to 460km (290 miles), while Tomahawk cruise missiles can strike targets more than 2,500km away, placing them within range of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other major Russian cities.

The move would previously have been banned under the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, from which the US unilaterally withdrew in 2019, accusing Russia of breaking the terms.

After July's NATO summit, however, Putin said that Russia would *"consider ourselves free"* to resume medium-range missile deployments, and would adopt *"mirror measures"* in response to the US-German decision.

The Russian military carried out the first-ever combat test of the Oreshnik last month, using the ballistic missile to batter a Ukrainian military industrial facility in Dnepropetrovsk with multiple warheads.

The test, which came after the US, France, and Britain gave Ukraine permission to use their missiles in attacks on internationally-recognized Russian territory, was intended to demonstrate that *"there will always be a response"* to escalation by the West, Putin said afterwards.

[READ MORE: Russia is ready to use any means to prevent its 'strategic defeat' by the West – Lavrov](#)

Any Oreshniks deployed in Belarus will be operated by the Russian Strategic Missile Forces (RSMF), Putin explained on Friday. However, he noted, it will be up to Belarus to choose potential targets for the missiles based on its own security needs. <https://www.rt.com/russia/608898-oreshnik-missiles-belarus-response/>

More F-16s delivered to Ukraine – Kiev

Provided by Denmark, the US-made fighter jets will strengthen the country's air defenses, according to Vladimir Zelensky

7 Dec, 2024 15:49



FILE PHOTO. © Ethan Miller / Getty Images

Ukraine has received a second batch of US-made F-16 fighter jets from Denmark, Vladimir Zelensky has announced. The aircraft will help protect the country from Russian airstrikes, he has claimed.

The Ukrainian leader **made the announcement on Saturday** morning, without clarifying how many of the advanced warplanes Kiev had received or whether they had already been deployed. Zelensky claimed, however, that *"the aircraft from the first*

batch, provided by the Danish people, are already intercepting Russian missiles."

*"Now, **our air shield has been further strengthened**,"* Zelensky wrote on X, thanking Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen for her continued support.

The **US allowed its NATO allies to provide Kiev with F-16s in the summer of 2023**, with several Western countries helping to train Ukrainian pilots. According to media reports, Kiev is supposed to receive around

80 jets, with Denmark committed to supplying a total of 19 F-16s.

Kiev **announced the arrival of the first batch of aircraft from Denmark and the Netherlands this August.** The same month, however, Ukraine lost one of the jets, along with a veteran pilot who was killed in the crash. The exact cause of the incident remains unclear, with one version being friendly fire from one of the country's US-made Patriot missiles. Following the loss, Zelensky fired his Air Force commander.

Western **media reports have warned that the F-16s won't be a "game changer"** on the battlefield because they won't have a decisive advantage over their Russian rivals.

Moscow has denounced the Western arms shipments, warning that they will only prolong the conflict without changing the outcome. It has also said that F-16 deliveries represent an escalation of hostilities.

<https://www.rt.com/news/608893-danish-fighter-jets-ukraine/>

German chancellor candidate calls for end to arming Kiev

Alice Weidel is the Alternative for Germany party's first-ever nominee for head of the government

7 Dec, 2024 15:03



Alice Weidel speaks to reporters at an AfD convention in Berlin, Germany, December 7, 2024 © Getty Images / Maryam Majd

The co-leader of the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, Alice Weidel, has said that she will oppose any arms supplies to Ukraine if she succeeds Olaf Scholz as the country's chancellor.

The AfD nominated Weidel as its candidate for the post on Saturday, in the party's first bid for the chancellery in its 11-year history. It has steadily risen in popularity since its founding in 2013, and is currently Germany's second-strongest political party.

Speaking to reporters after the nomination, Weidel promised to introduce drastic immigration restrictions, to roll back Scholz's climate policies, and to cut off military aid to Ukraine.

"We want peace in Ukraine," the 45-year-old said. *"We do not want any arms supplies, we do not want any tanks, we do not want any missiles. We do not want Taurus for Ukraine, which would make Germany a party to the war,"* she added, referring to a type of German-made cruise missile that would require German military personnel to be deployed to Ukraine to operate.

The AfD, Weidel declared, is a *"peace party."*

Scholz, along with his Green and Free Democrat coalition partners, overturned decades of foreign-policy pacifism in 2022 when they decided to supply weapons to the Ukrainian military.

Since then, Berlin has sent Kiev almost €17 billion (\$17.9 billion) in military, economic, and humanitarian aid, according to government figures. Although initially reluctant to supply heavy weapons, Scholz has authorized the transfer to Ukraine of tanks, artillery guns, anti-air missiles, and armored vehicles.

Before 2022, Germany relied on Russia for 55% of its supply of natural gas. Scholz' decision to halt Russian energy imports, coupled with his government's green policies, has led to soaring electricity costs, forcing some of the country's manufacturing giants – including [Volkswagen](#) and BASF – to [close plants](#) and lay off workers.

Amid economic decline and disputes within his coalition, the Scholz government collapsed last month. The chancellor is expected to lose a confidence vote in parliament later this month, after which a snap election will likely be held in late February. His center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) is currently polling at around 15%, with the AfD at 18%, and the center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) at 32%.

Weidel has little chance of winning the chancellery. Even if the AfD were to emerge as the largest party in February, all of Germany's other mainstream parties have ruled out entering a coalition with the right-wingers. After a string of regional election wins this year, 113 members of the 733-member Bundestag put forth a motion last month to ban the AfD as a *"Nazi party"* whose beliefs clash with the German constitution. Most of the lawmakers behind the proposal were Greens, joined by 31 members of the SPD and just six from the CDU.

<https://www.rt.com/news/608891-alice-weidel-afd-ukraine/>

Now what? A GOP government agenda

The Biden/Harris administration and its counterparts in many cities and states leave behind a mess. They have misused and abused the powers of government

By [Guy Giarrocchi, Real Clear Wire](#) December 6, 2024

Trump returns to the White House. The GOP has majorities in the Senate and House. Now what?

It's time to make America great again. To fix what "they" broke. To flip the narrative, so that government works for us – not the other way around. Yet, where to begin?

Inflation. Cleaning-up the Justice Department – including directives targeting parents attending school board meetings, "pro-lifers," and Catholics who like Latin Mass. The hostages held by Hamas, and Israel's fight with Hamas and other terror groups. Men playing women's sports. The Ukrainian-Russian war. Securing the border and doing something about our many million illegal immigrants. Closing down the failed Department of Education. Unleashing American energy – oil, natural gas, and nuclear. Holding higher education accountable. Protecting American farmland from the Chinese. Dealing with the insanity of the United Nations. Rebuilding our military and refocusing it on national security. Stopping "climate crisis" madness. Making America healthy. Fighting anti-Semitism. Combating violent crime in our cities.

The **Biden/Harris administration and its counterparts in many cities and states leave behind a mess.** They have misused and abused the powers of government.

For those more focused on governing than campaigning, **the bigger thrill is not Election Night celebrations but undoing harmful policies and enacting good ones.** Now the heavy lifting starts.

A smart, effective roadmap has to be a marriage of MAGA and conservative political priorities with "kitchen-table" issues. In short, prioritize the legislative agenda around the coalition that helped Republicans win Pennsylvania and other swing states.

With a narrow House majority and the inevitable Chuck Schumer-led filibusters in the Senate, this kind of focus will be critical to pushing issues over the finish line. Plus, these policies – and the legislators supporting them – must withstand the inevitable resistance from special interests and the legacy media, many already beginning their assault against the Trump agenda. All the more reason to maintain the diverse but fragile coalition that prevailed on November 5.

Trying to do everything at once, however, will drain resources and confuse the public, leaving Republicans vulnerable to obstruction from Democrats and their allies. Unifying priorities, effective messages, and well-executed legislative plans are essential to making progress and improving the lives of Americans. Success will offer opportunities to grow public support – and to accomplish even more. And yes, to win future elections, too.

What unites MAGA, conservative Republicans, first-time voters in rural Pennsylvania, and black and Hispanic voters in Philadelphia, Reading, and elsewhere who supported Trump for the first time? The "kitchen-table issues" that the GOP talked about. The practical things that matter to those of us focused on reality, rather than trying to advance an ideology or seek "revenge."

Priority one must be fighting inflation – making life more affordable. As Ronald Reagan explained: "Inflation is the cruelest tax." It eats away at every paycheck, every week, every day.

This will **take time, but the reversal begins with a few vital steps. Start by clawing back the unspent billions allocated for the so-called Inflation Reduction Act** (how Orwellian a name!).

Next, the **United States must be energy-independent. This lowers the cost of everything. Permits for drilling must be approved** so that American oil and natural gas can be unleashed to lower prices, raise our quality of life, and improve national security. Additionally, **the holds on oil and gas leases must be lifted.** Lastly, we **should allow Pennsylvanians – and our friends in Ohio and West Virginia – to sell liquified natural gas to our European allies.** We will make money and create jobs, while helping Germany, France, Poland and others get out from under Vladimir Putin's thumb.

Be **prepared to implement as many of Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy's DOGE recommendations as possible. We must not only stop the growth and reduce the power of the federal government;** we must also eliminate wasteful spending, regulations, and even whole agencies that make it harder for businesses to operate.

Next, **secure our borders and address the illegal immigration crisis.** Most of these people are being entirely subsidized by taxpayers. Start with the known criminals, then move on to those who have no jobs or host family here. We need to restore our borders and respect for the law – and stop encouraging people to sneak in, live

for free, and falsely claim "amnesty."

Next, **peace. Work to get our hostages home and to stabilize the firefights** around the world that drain our resources, divert our energies, and pull American service members into wars. Support Israel in its effort to rescue the hostages and eliminate terrorists, their masterminds, and their funders. Work to bring the Ukraine-Russia war to an end.

Make life more affordable and strengthen our economy. Secure our border and protect Americans and those respecting the rule of law. Strengthen our resolve with allies, support our military, and build peace through strength.

These are the goals and promises that unified the Trump coalition and won the election. From here, they can move on to other worthy and important goals – everything from school choice to tax reform, from the mess at the UN to protecting American farmland and rooting out the waste and inefficiencies of our bureaucracies and agencies.

But first, **focus on kitchen-table issues that unite voters**. Show voters that you've listened. Prove that you share their priorities. Gain their trust, grow the cause, and go on from there. It's an approach that makes sense not just politically but more importantly, for the good of the nation.

<https://www.wnd.com/2024/12/now-what-a-gop-government-agenda/>

Over 100 Navy SEALs set to descend on Washington D.C. in explosive show of support for Pete Hegseth

Trump's pick for secretary of defense has faced relentless media attacks in recent weeks

By [Jim Hoft, the Gateway Pundit](#) December 7, 2024



Washington, D.C., is bracing for an unprecedented show of support as over 100 Navy SEALs prepare to descend on the nation's capital, standing in solidarity with President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth.

Hegseth, a decorated Army combat veteran and prominent conservative voice, has faced relentless media attacks in recent weeks.

The fake news media have leveled accusations ranging from outdated and disproven sexual misconduct claims to allegations of public drunkenness and financial mismanagement during his tenure at Concerned Veterans for America (CVA).

Critics on the right are pushing back hard against what they view as a deliberate effort to derail a nominee poised to shake up the Defense Department.

Randy Lair, a trustee at CVA, categorically denied the whistleblower allegations, describing them as "sensational fabrications designed to undermine a patriot."

In an exclusive letter to the New York Post, Lair emphasized that Hegseth left CVA on good terms and voluntarily pursued opportunities at Fox News, where he gained further recognition as a staunch advocate for America's veterans.

Adding to this defense, Hegseth's mother, Penelope Hegseth, appeared on Fox & Friends, emotionally urging the public to reject these "outrageous" claims.

While the mainstream media attempts to paint Hegseth in a negative light, his supporters are mounting a robust counter-offensive.

Conservative pundits, lawmakers, and military veterans have voiced their steadfast support for the nominee, dismissing the accusations as a leftist smear campaign.

Among his most vocal backers are members of the Navy SEAL Foundation, a group that embodies the elite warrior ethos of America's special operations forces.

Bill Brown, a combat veteran and leader within the Foundation, confirmed during conversation with Fox News' Will Cain that over 100 SEALs are planning a coordinated march in Washington, D.C., to publicly endorse Hegseth.

"I just got off the phone with Bill Brown. Bill Brown is a member of the Navy SEAL Foundation, a leader in the Navy SEAL Foundation. He's a combat veteran and the leader of the Navy SEAL swim, which you and some of you who are listening and watching, like Brent Suriano, may have participated in," Cain wrote.

"If you've ever participated in this, you know something about honoring America's warriors. I

just got off the phone with Bill Brown moments before I came on air... I'm just pouring out to you what Bill told me moments before the beginning of this broadcast: over 100 Navy SEALs have organized and committed to march on Washington, D.C. Over 100 Navy SEALs are prepared to throw their support openly behind Pete Hegseth."

WATCH:

Over 100 Navy SEALs are committed to march on Washington, D.C. in support of [@PeteHegseth](#) [@FreedomSpirit77](#) and others are openly showing who is standing with Pete

On The [@WillCain](#) Show pic.twitter.com/6RmbDBBdVd

— The Will Cain Show (@WillCainShow_) [December 4, 2024](#)

The SEALs' mobilization comes at a critical juncture, as Senate Republicans are poised to vote on Hegseth's confirmation. While sources indicate overwhelming GOP support, a few senators, including Joni Ernst, Lindsey Graham, and John Thune, are reportedly on the fence.

Only four Republican votes against him would be enough to block the confirmation.

[Editor's note: This article originally appeared on [The Gateway Pundit.com](#)]

<https://www.wnd.com/2024/12/over-100-navy-seals-set-to-descend-on-washington-d-c-in-explosive-show-of-support-for-pete-hegseth/>

OP ED

What the Trump Nominees Have Not Done – And Will Not Do



[Victor Davis Hanson](#) | Dec 06, 2024

Deflated by the resounding November defeat, the left now believes it can magically rebound by destroying President-elect Donald Trump's cabinet nominees.

Many of Trump's picks are well outside the usual Washington, D.C./New York political, media, and corporate nexus.

But that is precisely the point -- to insert reformers into a bloated, incompetent, and weaponized government who are not part of it.

Trump's nominee for FBI director, Kash Patel, is already drawing severe criticism.

His furious enemies cannot go after his resume since he has spent a lifetime in private, congressional, and executive billets, both in investigations and intelligence.

Instead, they claim he is too vindictive and does not reflect the ethos of the FBI.

But what will Patel not do as the new director?

He will not serially lie under oath to federal investigators as did interim FBI Director Andrew McCabe, a current Patel critic.

He will not forge an FBI court affidavit, as did convicted felon and agency lawyer Kevin Clinesmith.

He will not claim amnesia 245 times under congressional oath to evade embarrassing admissions as did former Director James Comey.

He will not partner with a foreign national to collect dirt and subvert a presidential campaign as the FBI did with Christopher Steele in 2016.

He will not use the FBI to draft social media to suppress news unfavorable to a presidential candidate on the eve of an election.

He would not have suppressed FBI knowledge that Hunter Biden's laptop was genuine -- to allow the lie to spread that it was "Russian disinformation" on the eve of the 2020 election.

He will not raid the home of an ex-president with SWAT teams, surveil Catholics, monitor parents at school board meetings, or go after pro-life peaceful protestors.

Decorated combat veteran Pete Hegseth is another controversial nominee for secretary of defense.

What will Hegseth likely not do?

Go AWOL without notifying the president of a serious medical procedure as did current Secretary Lloyd Austin?

Install race and gender criteria for promotion and mandate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training?

Insinuate falsely that cabals of white supremacists had infiltrated the military --only to alienate that entire demographic and thus ensure the Pentagon came up 40,000 recruits short?

Oversee the scramble from Kabul that saw \$50 billion in U.S. military equipment abandoned to Taliban

terrorists?

Watch passively as a Chinese spy balloon traversed the continental United States for a week?

Allow the chairman of the Joint Chiefs to promise his Chinese communist counterpart that the People's Liberation Army would first be informed if the President of the United States was felt to issue a dangerous order?

Rotate into the Pentagon from a defense contractor boardship and then leave office to rotate back there to leverage procurement decisions?

Oversee the Pentagon's serial flunking of fiscal audits?

Health and Human Services nominee Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. is certainly a maverick. He may earn the most Democratic hits, given his former liberal credentials.

But what will RFK also not do as HHS secretary?

Oversee his agencies circumventing U.S. law by transferring money to communist China to help it produce lethal gain-of-function viruses of the COVID-19 sort -- in the manner of Dr. Fauci?

Organize scientists to go after critics of mandatory masking and defame them?

Give pharmaceutical companies near-lifetime exemptions from legal jeopardy for rushing into production mRNA vaccines not traditionally vetted and tested?

Leave office to monetize his HHS expertise and thus make millions from the pharmaceutical companies?

Trump's nominee for Director of National Intelligence, former congressional representative and military veteran Tulsi Gabbard, will soon be defamed in congressional hearings.

But what has Gabbard not done?

Joined "51 former intelligence authorities" to lie on the eve of the 2020 election that the Hunter Biden laptop "had all the hallmarks" of a Russian information/disinformation operation" -- in an effort to swing the election to incumbent Joe Biden?

Lied under congressional oath like former DNI James Clapper, who claimed he only gave the "least untruthful answer" in congressional testimony?

Encourage the FBI to monitor a presidential campaign in efforts to discredit it --in the manner of former CIA Director John Brennan, who lied not once but twice under oath?

Fail to foresee the American meltdown in Kabul, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel, or the Houthis' takeover of the Red Sea?

We are going to hear some outrageous things in the upcoming congressional confirmation hearings.

But one thing we will not hear about are the crimes, deceptions, and utter incompetence of prior and current government grandees.

The current crew, not their proposed Trump replacements, prompted the sick and tired American people to demand different people.

Voters want novel approaches to reform a government that they not only no longer trust but also now deeply fear.

<https://townhall.com/columnists/victordavishanson/2024/12/06/what-the-trump-nominees-have-not-done-and-will-not-do-n2648691>