

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update April 25, 2024 (Nisan 17, 5784)

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Israel-Hamas War, Day 202

Israeli War Cabinet Discusses Gaza Talks Renewal in Tel Aviv as Dozens Rally for Hostage Deal

- *Egypt warns of 'catastrophic consequences' as Rafah offensive looms*
- *IDF: Nine soldiers wounded in combat since Wednesday outside the Gaza Strip*
- *Hamas' negotiations representative: Israel plans to take over 20 percent of Gaza Strip*
 - *Israel reportedly strikes gas tanker deep in Lebanon*
 - *Greek military ship intercepts two Houthi drones in the Red Sea*
- *IDF says it killed terrorists who intended to launch rockets in central Gaza*
 - *Biden signs Israel defense aid bill, says delivery imminent*
- *Hamas airs video showing Israeli-American hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin in Gaza captivity*
 - *Hundreds marched in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, after video aired*
- *Israeli army mobilizes two reserve brigades to return to operation in southern Gaza*
 - *Germany to resume cooperation with UNRWA*

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US Official: Israeli Strike Targeted Air Defense Radar System for Natanz Nuclear Facility; Three missiles were fired from Israeli fighter aircraft outside of Iran on Friday morning, April 19, with very limited strike, a senior US official told American media. The Israelis were targeting an air defense radar site near Isfahan that's part of the protection of the Natanz nuclear facility, the official said. The first assessment is that the strike took out the site, but the assessment hasn't been completed, the official added. The strike was intended to send a signal to Iran that Israel has these capabilities, but was not looking to escalate the situation, according to the official. An Israeli official told another American news agency earlier on Friday that the strike on Iran "was intended to signal to Iran that Israel had the ability to strike inside the country." Another intelligence source told media that initial estimates are that Iran will not respond to the attack on its territory. Despite this, reports in Israel said that Israel's aerial defense system is at peak readiness. (INN / VFI News)

Shin Bet Believes Only 40 Hamas Hostages Still Alive, Report Says; Intelligence from Israel's Shin Bet domestic security agency suggests that only 40 out of the 133 hostages held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip are still alive, British media reported on Sunday, April 21. "[Intelligence] is much easier to access than before October 7 when we had limited access to Gaza and we didn't have a lot of possibilities of sources. The situation is completely different because we are there," an unnamed source told the British news outlet. The Shin Bet denied the report, calling it "incorrect" and saying that it "does not reflect the views of the Shin Bet." "The numbers presented in the report are solely the author's opinion and are not based on information provided by the Shin Bet," the agency said in a statement. The terror group is currently demanding a six-week truce in exchange for the release of less than 20 hostages, according to its response handed to mediators last week, which coincided with the beginning of the unprecedented Iranian attack on Israel. Ministers Benny Gantz and Gadi Eizenkot have called for a War Cabinet meeting to explore additional solutions for the hostage deal deadlock. A senior official conceded that while hostage talks have made little progress lately, Israel is expecting Washington to pressure the Qatari mediators, and is exploring different avenues to break the current impasse. (YNet / VFI News)

Netanyahu Hints at Rafah Operation, Vows to Free Hostages; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hinted that the IDF would soon launch a military operation in Rafah as he vowed to free the remaining 133 hostages held in Gaza, in a special address to the nation in advance of Passover. "In the coming days we will increase the military and political pressure on Hamas because this is the only way to free our hostages and achieve our victory," Netanyahu said on Sunday, April 21. "Until now, all proposals for the release of our hostages have been rejected by Hamas outright," Netanyahu explained as he blamed the terror group for the failed talks for a hostage deal. "Instead of withdrawing from its extreme positions, Hamas is

counting on a rift among us. It draws encouragement from the [international] pressure being directed at the Government of Israel,” Netanyahu stated. “As a result of this, it has only hardened its conditions for the release of our hostages,” Netanyahu said. In language reminiscent of the Passover story in which Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to allow the Jewish slaves to leave Egypt, Netanyahu said that Hamas was “hardening its heart and refusing to let our people go.” (JPost / VFI News)

Palestinian Ruling Party Admits: Hamas Steals Aid, Kills Aid Workers in Gaza; Fatah, the “moderate” ruling party of the Palestinian Authority, has admitted on live television that Hamas steals humanitarian aid and kills aid workers in the Gaza Strip. The admission, captured by Palestinian Media Watch, confirms what Israel has been saying all along — and goes further, stating that Hamas is not only responsible for endangering aid workers by hiding among them but also asserts that Hamas has been killing aid workers directly. Palestinian Media Watch reported: “In an incredible and rare admission, Fatah has corroborated what Israel has been saying all along: that Hamas is responsible for turmoil connected to distribution of the humanitarian aid sent into Gaza. A Fatah TV anchor reported that throughout the war, Hamas has been committing what is essentially a triple crime—it has attacked and killed aid workers in order to control aid distribution, stolen the food and water for itself, and caused food prices to skyrocket.” The Fatah-run TV host said: “Hamas’ persecution of any party who is a source for distributing the [humanitarian] aid or securing it began from the start of the war (i.e., 2023 Gaza war), as Hamas persecuted well-known figures and teams of volunteers on the ground in mid-October [2023].” “It attacked them and killed some of them for two reasons: Firstly, preventing any activity by any [other] party in the Gaza Strip; and secondly, ensuring Hamas control over the aid and its storage, which of course leads to these crazy and unreal prices that no one can pay in the shadow of this destruction.” “After the occupation (i.e., Israel) bombed storehouses controlled by Hamas, the accumulation of tons of various food and aid products that Hamas had taken exclusivity over became clear, at a time when the Gaza Strip is suffering from hunger.” (BB / VFI News)

Israel Medical Association: Doctors Must Treat Hamas Terrorists; The Israel Medical Association published a letter on Sunday, April 21, in which it calls on all doctors to tend to Hamas terrorists, even if they murdered Jews on October 7th. “Caring for every person, including Hamas terrorists, is required and is even one of our obligations as physicians. The rules of ethics, international treaties and declarations, and even Israeli law demand that a physician tends to every individual no matter who,” the letter stated. The letter was sent to administrators after demonstrations were held at several hospitals against the medical care of Nukhba terrorists who participated in the October 7th massacre in southern Israel. “The Israel Medical Association ethics code calls to continue medical care during an armed conflict, regardless of the patient’s identity. The only consideration that stands before the physician is the medical condition of the patient.” “Therefore, despite the horrific acts of the Hamas terrorists, we as physicians will give the proper care and will let the judicial system bring them to justice,” the head of the association’s ethics office, Dr. Yossi Walfish, wrote. (INN / VFI News)

UN Newsletter Exposed for Sharing Ways to Protest in US Against Israel on Tax Day; An April 11 edition of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights’ NGO Action News, which provides updates about civil society organizations worldwide “relevant to the Palestine issue,” linked readers to the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR) list of “5 Ways to Take Action for Tax Day.” Included within the list were instructions about how protesters who did not “want [their] tax dollars to fund genocide” could “disrupt for a free Palestine.” The second item on USCPR’s list was a hyperlink for protesters seeking to engage in a “coordinated multi-city economic blockade to free Palestine,” an effort organizers noted was “not affiliated with USCPR.” In the destination page, blockade organizers A15 describe efforts to “identify and blockade major choke points in the economy, focusing on points of production and circulation with the aim of causing the most economic impact,” effectively “blocking the arteries of capitalism and jamming the wheels of production.” American media reported on the April 15

blockades when anti-Israel protesters stopped traffic outside Washington's Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, Chicago's O'Hare Airport, California's Golden Gate Bridge, and on the I-5 in Eugene, Ore. Gatherings also took place outside the New York Stock Exchange and Philadelphia's City Hall, at San Antonio's Valero headquarters and in Los Angeles, Oakland, Tampa, and Miami. (FN / VFI News)

Columbia Rabbi Tells Jewish Students to Leave Campus, Warns that School, NYPD 'Cannot Guarantee Your Safety'; The Orthodox rabbi at Columbia University and Barnard College sent a message recommending Jewish students to leave campus and go home as anti-Israel agitators have continued an "encampment" on campus, and participants were caught on camera espousing full-on support for terrorism and supporting violence toward Jewish students. In a WhatsApp message sent to hundreds before the start of Passover, Rabbi Elie Buechler, director of OU-LJIC at Columbia/Barnard, told students to leave "as soon as possible" until the situation improves, noting that "what we are witnessing in and around campus is terrible and tragic." "The events of the last few days, especially last night, have made it clear that Columbia University's Public Safety and the NYPD cannot guarantee Jewish students' safety in the face of extreme antisemitism and anarchy," Buechler wrote. "It deeply pains me to say that I would strongly recommend you return home as soon as possible and remain home until the reality in and around campus has dramatically improved." The rabbi added, "It is not our job as Jews to ensure our own safety on campus. No one should have to endure this level of hatred, let alone at school." (FN / VFI News)

S&P Cuts Israel's Long-Term Credit Ratings in Wake of Iranian Attack; Ratings agency S&P Global on Thursday, April 18, cut Israel's long-term ratings to A-plus from AA-minus following Iran's drone and missile attack on Israel and amidst the already elevated geopolitical risks for Israel. "We forecast that Israel's general government deficit will widen to 8% of GDP in 2024, mostly as a result of increased defense spending," S&P Global said in its statement, as quoted by British media. Earlier this month, the Fitch credit rating agency reaffirmed Israel's credit rating at an A+ level, the removal of the "Negative Watch" and an update of the rating outlook from "Stable" to "Negative." According to the company, "Geopolitical risks associated with the war in Gaza remain elevated and escalation risks remain present, but Fitch believes the risks to the credit profile have broadened and their impact may take longer to assess, so has removed the RWN on Israel's A+ rating." In February, Moody's credit rating agency downgraded Israel's credit rating from A1 to A2 due to the war with Hamas. It was the first such downgrade in Israel's history. (INN / VFI News)

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