

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update May 20, 2024 (Iyyar 12, 5784)

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Israel-Hamas War, Day 227

Gallant Vows to Expand Israel's Rafah Offensive; Qatar: 'No Political Will' for Gaza Truce

- *Gallant vows to expand Israel's Rafah offensive*
 - *Qatar: 'No political will' for Gaza truce*
- *Iranian president, foreign minister killed in helicopter crash*
- *Israeli forces assassinate top Hamas police officers in central Gaza strikes, IDF says*
 - *Israeli drone reportedly attacks truck in western Syria*
- *White House's Sullivan briefs Netanyahu following Saudi Arabia visit: 'There's potential for Israel and the Palestinian people'*
- *White House's Sullivan briefs Netanyahu following Saudi Arabia visit: 'There's potential for Israel and the Palestinian people'*
- *Houthis launch ballistic missile at the Gulf of Aden, CENTCOM says*
 - *Israeli soldier dies of wounds sustained in Gaza combat*
- *Dozens of Israelis throw rocks and vandalize Palestinian trucks in the West Bank*
 - *Finance Minister Smotrich: Israel must take over southern Lebanon if Hezbollah doesn't respond to ultimatum*

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Netanyahu Responds to Gallant: I Won't Replace Hamastan with Fatahstan; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded on Wednesday evening, May 15, to Defense Minister Yoav Gallant's call for him to declare that Israel will not exercise governing control of the Gaza Strip following the ongoing war with the Hamas terrorist organization. "I am not ready to replace Hamastan with Fatahstan. The first condition for the day after is to eliminate Hamas and do it without excuses," Netanyahu said. The Prime Minister's statement comes in response to an address by Gallant in which the Defense Minister declared, "I must reiterate - I will not agree to the establishment of Israeli military rule in Gaza. Israel must not establish civilian rule in Gaza." US Secretary of State Antony Blinken also warned Israel on Wednesday not to reoccupy Gaza, to refrain from a major Rafah operation, and to finalize a day-after plan for the enclave, as he spoke to reporters in Kyiv. "When it comes to the future of Gaza, we do not support and will not support an Israeli reoccupation," Blinken said. Further, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said on Wednesday, regarding the scenarios for the "day after" the war in Gaza, that Hamas and the other Palestinian Arab organizations are the ones who will determine the future of the Gaza Strip. However, against such scenarios spoke Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Justice Minister Yariv Levin. More specifically, the latter stated that "the people of Israel are not willing to be humiliated. The people of Israel are not ready to be led into the Oslo 2 process, which will lead Israel to another disaster. The people of Israel will not agree to hand over Gaza to the control of the Palestinian Terrorist Authority." (INN / VFI News)

My Fellow Palestinians: Stop Blaming the Jews—Hamas Is Starving Our Brothers and Sisters in Gaza / Opinion; How can we understand the terrible, self-imposed deprivation now gripping the people of Gaza? The heart-wrenching stampede that unfolded in Gaza last Thursday (May 2) casts a stark light on the brutal reality of life under Hamas's rule. It is a somber reminder of the urgent need to address the suffering of Gaza's people, but it also serves as a crucial moment to clarify the accountability for Gaza's plight. The chaos and desperation that led to this tragedy are direct outcomes of Hamas's governance, which prioritizes violence and killing Jews over the welfare of its population. The stampede, occurring during an aid distribution, tragically underscores the severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Driven by sheer desperation, people found themselves in a deadly crush, a situation that should never occur. To pave the way for peace and stability for my brothers and sisters in Gaza, it is essential to acknowledge the root causes of their suffering. Hamas's diversion of resources, suppression of dissent, and neglect of civilian needs must end. The international community, along with the Palestinian people, must demand

accountability and seek a future where governance prioritizes human dignity, economic opportunity, and peaceful coexistence. As a Palestinian human rights activist deeply sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinian people and the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I can tell you beyond the shadow of a doubt that the terrorist group Hamas is responsible for the suffering of Gazans. (NW / VFI News)

Israeli Defense Chief Warns Operation in Rafah Will Intensify As Commando Unit Is Deployed; Israel's defense minister warned that the battles in Rafah will intensify and more troops will be deployed after a commando unit entered the city in southern Gaza. Speaking to troops stationed along the Gaza border, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said the IDF has already decimated parts of Hamas' infrastructure in the outskirts of Rafah, with the military focusing on taking out the terror group for good. "This operation will continue with additional forces that will enter [Rafah]," Gallant said in a statement. "Several tunnels in the area have been destroyed by our forces and more tunnels will be destroyed soon. "This operation will intensify, and Hamas is not an organization that can regenerate itself now," Gallant added. "It has no reserves, it has no ability to manufacture weapons, it has no supplies, it has no munitions, it has no ability to properly treat terrorists who are injured, and this means that we are wearing it down." To accomplish that goal, the IDF deployed members of its Commando Brigade Wednesday night, May 15, to join the 162nd Division and 401st brigade, which had already eliminated "several terrorist squads" stationed in eastern Rafah, according to the Israeli military. The reinvigorated forces in Rafah have now taken down several rocket launchers with long-range capabilities on Thursday, the IDF said. (NYP / VFI News)

Revealed: Hamas Has Been Spying on Palestinian Civilians for Years – Report; Amid Hamas's governance of the Gaza Strip, the terrorist organization had also been surveilling and building files on civilians, journalists, and individuals who questioned the government, according to a report by renowned American media from Monday, May 13, that reviewed internal documents taken from raids in Gaza by Israel's military intelligence directorate. According to the documents, Hamas leaders had been governing the people in a tyrannical manner that did not allow civilians to stray off the course of their rule. It was revealed that security officials would trail journalists and suspicious behavior. Hamas reported on Gaza residents through a specialized unit, the General Security Service, which functioned as a part of the government and made use of informants throughout Gaza. According to Israel's military dictate, the files created by the unit contained information on at least 10,000 Palestinians in Gaza, and it is believed that Hamas head Yahya Sinwar was in charge of directly overseeing the unit. Records reflect that in some cases, authorities followed people to investigate their personal lives, such as to see if married individuals were carrying out affairs. (JPost / VFI News)

Erdan at UN: 'You've Done Practically Nothing to Secure the Release of the Hostages'; Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, on Thursday, May 16, criticized the UN for its failure to condemn Hamas for its October 7 attack on Israel and for its kidnapping of Israelis that day. Speaking at a UN Security Council discussion which, for the first time, focused on the hostages being held by Hamas in Gaza, Erdan noted that "our hostages have been held in Gaza for 223 days, and this is the first meeting being held by any UN body to focus on their suffering and ways to release them." "In the past 32 weeks since October 7th, the Security Council and the UN have done practically nothing to secure the release of the hostages. It is heartbreaking and amoral," he added. "Our hostages are enduring beatings, torture, and rape. Those in need of medication are being deprived. Those suffering from mental illness are languishing," continued Erdan. "Israel has done everything possible to get medication to the hostages in need – through the Red Cross and through other mediators – but to this day, there has not even been any confirmation that they reached the hostages. Not a word." While he acknowledged the importance of issuing calls to release the hostages, Erdan also pointed out that such calls do not have any real impact on Hamas. (INN / VFI News)

Erdogan Claims: Israel Will Target Turkey Next; Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan claimed on Wednesday, May 15, that Israel would “set its sights” on Turkey if it succeeded in defeating Hamas in the Gaza Strip, French media reported. “Do not think that Israel will stop in Gaza,” Erdogan told his party lawmakers in the parliament in the capital Ankara. “Unless it’s stopped... this rogue and terrorist state will set its sights on Anatolia sooner or later,” he added, referring to the Turkish peninsula also called Asia Minor that comprises more than half of Turkey’s territory. “We will continue to stand by Hamas, which fights for the independence of its own land and which defends Anatolia,” stated Erdogan. Erdogan has increased his verbal attacks on Israel since the start of the war in Gaza on October 7. In one speech, the Turkish President said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “committed one of the greatest atrocities of this century in Gaza and has already put his name down in history as the butcher of Gaza.” Further, the Turkish Trade Ministry recently said it had suspended all export and import operations with Israel due to what it described as its “aggression against Palestine in violation of international law and human rights.” In response, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has decided to raise the import duty rate on goods imported from Turkey to 100% and will bring the decision for government approval. (INN / VFI News)

Customs and Border Protection Refuses to Reveal Terror Watchlist Nationalities As Illegal Immigration Explodes on Its Watch; Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has rejected a request by American media to reveal the nationalities of people on the FBI terror watchlist arrested at the border by Border Patrol, citing “privacy interests” of those involved. The news outlet filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request in October requesting the nationalities of suspects on the FBI terror watchlist arrested at the southern border entering between ports of entry by Border Patrol. Over six months later, CBP told the outlet that it will not provide the information, although it acknowledges the information is maintained in the Terrorist Screening Dataset (TSDS). The letter says it is applying exemptions to protect the disclosure of files that may create a “clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy” and must balance a public’s right to disclosure against an individual’s right to privacy. “The privacy interests of the individuals in the records you have requested outweigh any minimal public interest in disclosure of the information,” it says. It should be noted that the news outlet did not request personal information, only the countries from which the encounters originated. (FN / VFI News)

Emerging Hardline Dutch Coalition to Look for Right ‘Time’ to Move Embassy to Jerusalem; In an advanced draft for a coalition agreement between four right-wing Dutch political factions, the partners agreed to look for the “appropriate time” for moving the embassy of the Netherlands to Jerusalem. The draft agreement published Thursday morning, May 16, follows the November general elections in the Netherlands, in which the pro-Israel, far-right Party for Freedom of Geert Wilders received the highest share of the vote with 37 seats out of 150 in the Dutch lower house. The draft states that research will be conducted into “the appropriate time in which the move of the embassy to Jerusalem can occur.” If the Netherlands does follow through, it will be the sixth country to open an embassy in Jerusalem, following Papua New Guinea, Kosovo, Honduras, Guatemala and the US. Israel sees the moves as strengthening its claim to the city as its capital, though most foreign countries situate their embassies in or around Tel Aviv. The Jerusalem clause, which is unprecedented in coalition agreements in Western Europe, is one of multiple dramatic departures in the 26-page document from agreements undertaken in previous coalition contracts. (TOI / VFI News)

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