

# **Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update June 17, 2024 (Sivan 11, 5784)**



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## ***Israel-Hamas War, Day 255***

### ***Report: Israel Struck Vehicle in Lebanon; Hamis Health Ministry Says 10 Palestinians Killed in Gaza***

- *Israeli military spokesperson says Hezbollah 'bringing us to brink of escalation'*
- *IDF says it intercepted aerial target from Lebanon near Acre in northern Israel*
- *IDF announces daily 'tactical pause' in attempt to increase flow of aid into Gaza*
  - *Protesters against the government block major highways across Israel*
  - *IDF: Attacked Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon*
- *U.S. Naval forces rescue crew from Greek-owned ship struck by Houthis in Red Sea*

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***215 Rockets Fired at North After IDF Killing of ‘Most Senior’ Hezbollah Officer Yet;*** Hezbollah launched some 215 rockets and several more missiles and drones at northern Israel on Wednesday, June 12, in what it said was a response to the killing of a senior commander in the terror group by an Israeli airstrike a night earlier. The barrages marked the largest attack carried out by Hezbollah during ongoing fighting on the Lebanon border amid the war in the Gaza Strip. And the terror group vowed to ramp up its attacks in retaliation for Israel’s elimination of top commander for the central region of the southern border strip, Taleb Abdullah. At a funeral procession in Beirut, senior Hezbollah official Hashem Safieddine said the group would increase the intensity, force, and quantity of its operations against Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a security assessment Wednesday evening “in light of the developments in the north,” his office said. The successive Hezbollah attacks began on Wednesday morning with a barrage of at least 90 rockets fired at several areas in northern Israel, including Tiberias — for the first time amid the war — Safed and Rosh Pina, sending tens of thousands of people to shelters, as Jewish Israelis celebrated the Shavuot holiday. The IDF said another 70 rockets were then launched at the Mount Meron area, home to a sensitive air traffic control base. Ten more rockets were fired at the northern community of Zar’it, and an anti-tank guided missile struck a factory of the Plasan armored vehicle manufacturer in Kibbutz Sasa, causing damage. Many of the rockets were shot down by air defenses. There were no injuries in the attacks, but several rocket impacts sparked fires in northern Israel. Some 25 firefighting teams and eight planes were working to extinguish fires near Amiad, in the Ein Zeitim forest, and near Beit Jann, the Fire and Rescue Service said. (TOI / VFI News)

***Ecological War: The Environmental Cost of Hezbollah’s Missiles and UAVs on Northern Israel;*** “From the very beginning of the war, we suffered from relatively large fires in the Rosh Hanikra forest, where 1,400 dunams burned, and around 500 acres burned in the Ramot Naftali forest. These were the first fires we had,” says Sheli Ben Yishai, director of the northern region of the Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael-Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF). Firefighters, with the assistance of the aerial firefighting unit, handled and are handling all the fires. Fire and Rescue Authority Commissioner Eyal Casspi instructed at the beginning of the war to prepare for all scenarios. The Authority also recruited emergency standby squads throughout the country, training and equipping them to help in the event of fires. “In a general assessment, regarding KKL-JNF territories, since the beginning of the war, we are talking about 13,000-14,000 dunams of forests that have burned,” Ben Yishai said. The damage, Ben Yishai pointed out, is to an entire ecosystem: “It’s also the vegetation of the grove and the forest that burned at different intensities, and there are also reptiles, mammals, and other animals inside the forest. I think there is significant damage there, and the restoration will be long-term.” The recent fires also caused extensive damage to farmers. “This is the first time we have encountered such a scale of damage. This is more damage than the fires caused during the Second Lebanon War. There was also damage then, but not on such a scale,” said Segev Yerbam, CEO of the Galilee Development Company. (JPost / VFI News)

***Hamas Submits Response, Israeli Official: They Rejected the Biden Proposal;*** Hamas has given Qatari and Egyptian mediators its official response to the proposal for a hostage and ceasefire deal,

American media reported on Tuesday, June 11, citing two sources with knowledge of the issue. Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan later told Al Mayadeen that Hamas' response included several comments on the proposal, which was recently outlined by US President Joe Biden. He said Hamas is committed to what it said before, which is the demand for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. Hamas and Islamic Jihad said in a joint statement, "The response prioritizes the interest of the Palestinian people, and the need to completely stop the ongoing aggression in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian delegation expressed its willingness to act positively to reach an agreement that will end this war against our people based on a sense of national responsibility." British media quoted an official briefed on the talks as saying that the Hamas response includes "a new timeline" for a permanent ceasefire and withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza. Hamas is refusing to allow Israel the right to veto specific "serious" terrorists from being released in return for the captive female soldiers, even though Israel agreed to compromise on having the power to veto only half of the 200 terrorists who would be released. In addition, Hamas staunchly refuses the Israeli demand to exile the terrorists, not even to the Gaza Strip, and demands that they be returned to their place of origin, including Judea and Samaria. Israel refuses to allow terrorists to return to Judea and Samaria where they can easily attack Israelis again. The terror organization also demands not only an American guarantee to end the war, but also guarantees from China, Russia, and Turkey. (INN / VFI News)

***Rescued Hostages Were Beaten 'Almost Every Day,' Says Doctor Who Treated Them;*** The doctor overseeing the recovery of four Israeli hostages rescued from the Gaza Strip said Monday, June 10, that they were beaten regularly during their captivity by the Hamas terror group. Dr. Itai Pessach of Sheba Medical Center outside Tel Aviv told American media that the hostages suffered almost daily abuse and that their time in captivity was "a harsh, harsh experience." "Every hour, both physical, mental, and other types, and that is something that is beyond comprehension," Pessach said. According to the American news outlet, Pessach said the eight months the hostages spent in Hamas captivity "left a significant mark on their health," despite their outward appearance of being in good shape. "They had no protein, so their muscles are extremely wasted, there is damage to some other systems because of that. There have been periods where they got almost no food whatsoever," he added. Further, the mother of one of the four former hostages says her son has described to her "very strange rules" the Palestinian terrorists made him live by. Evgeniia Kozlova told British media, "He told us that they were required to follow some very strange rules like you can't sit with your legs towards these terrorists." "You could be punished for getting the wrong water or getting it from the wrong place ... They liked to tell them: 'You're an animal, you're a donkey, you're a fool, you're dirt,'" she added. (TOI / VFI News)

***Efficient Israeli Response to Iranian Attack Results Flights Resumption, Tourism Ministry Says;*** Tourism in Israel is still in a slump, after a significant downturn in the fourth quarter of 2023 according to data from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics. The reopening of Terminal 1 at Ben Gurion Airport and restarted operations from low-cost airlines might help reverse that trend, bolstering Israel's struggling tourism sector. Tourism is a vital sector in Israel, accounting for 2.8% of the country's gross domestic product and about 3.5% of its total employment. Direct and indirect tourism jobs account for about 6% of all jobs in Israel. Israel's successful response to the Iranian attack in April sent a message to the airline industry, said Peleg Lewi, foreign affairs adviser to the Tourism Ministry. "The successful interception of 99% of Iran's attack achieved something they never considered. It proved that it was safe to fly to Israel. Ben Gurion Airport wasn't even at risk, and there was no damage," he said. Flights to Israel are profitable for airlines, Lewi added, so the companies were eager to restart flights to Israel when it was safe to do so. Ryanair, an Irish low-cost airline, is the first low-cost carrier to resume operations in Israel. Lewi hopes that that decision will be a tipping point. "Eventually, other airlines will see things are somewhat normal despite the war and return their operations as well," he said. (YNet / VFI News)

***Six Russian Nationals with Potential ISIS Ties Are Arrested in NYC, Philly and LA;*** Six Russian nationals with potential ties to ISIS have been arrested in New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles in a coordinated sting by law enforcement. Two ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) officials told American media that they arrested the suspected terrorist affiliates last week after the FBI raised the alarm. The suspects are originally from Tajikistan, and they also have Russian citizenship. Anonymous ICE officials told the newspaper a wiretap revealed one of the suspects talking about bombs. “Remember the Boston Marathon [bombing]? I’m afraid something like that might happen again or worse,” one official told the news outlet. The suspect in question has been involved with law enforcement before and had a court date next year, according to the source. It comes as top law enforcement officials warned the threat of a terrorist attack in the US has risen “enormously” over the past few months. Attorney General Merrick Garland made the astonishing admission while testifying before the House Judiciary Committee last week during a hearing dedicated to investigating the department's politicization. “I am worried about the possibility of a terrorist attack in the country after October 7,” Attorney General Garland said. “The threat level for us has gone up enormously.” (DM / VFI News)

***Smotrich Redirects Palestinian Authority Funds to Terror Victims;*** Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has ordered the Tax Authority to deduct a sum of 130 million NIS from monies transferred to the Palestinian Authority and transfer the funds instead to 28 families of terror victims. Speaking to Israeli media on Thursday morning, June 13, Smotrich said that the move is historically just. “Following court rulings and from the funds which were deducted, which are sums which were transferred to prisoners who were involved in terror and to their families, this week I signed an order to transfer millions of shekels to the families of terror victims,” he explained. “The Palestinian Authority continues to tell the world that it is on the verge of collapse and continues paying the families of terrorists and transferring money for terror. The minimum of the minimum is to transfer compensation to the families of terror victims, from these funds. And that is what we are doing.” A source in the Finance Ministry explained that all the lawsuits which were ready, from a legal perspective, and which reached the Finance Ministry, were included in this order. (INN / VFI News)

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