

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update April 14, 2025 (Nisan 16, 5785)



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Israel-Hamas War 556 Days, Two Former IDF Chiefs, Over 1,500 IDF Soldiers Join Call to End Gaza War, Return Hostages

- **CEASE-FIRE:** *No breakthrough in Israel-Hamas negotiations, Palestinian, Qatari sources say after Hamas reviews Israeli offer*
- **ISRAEL:** *3,500 Israeli academics sign petition urging end to Gaza war*
- **Gaza:** *Israel's actions in Gaza 'not proportionate,' EU's Kallas says*
- **YEMEN:** *At least seven killed, 30 wounded in U.S. strikes*

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If you are interested in having Yachad Ministries to come your church and share about what is going on in Israel and the Middle East, and how the Bible is unfolding right in front of our eyes.

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Happy Passover!

With Passover started on Saturday at sundown, we wish all of our readers a wonderful week of festivities! May You enjoy family gatherings, get the leaven out of your homes and hearts, and worship the Lord Your God in freedom and joy. As you observe the Passover, we pray that You receive all of God's blessings, health, happiness, brotherhood, and reflect on Yeshua, our Passover Lamb, and His sacrifice for us. We are immensely grateful for you, your love and continual support. Let us also remember the hostages who are still in captivity and pray for their quick release into freedom. Join us in declaring "Let my people go!". Chag Pesach Sameach!

Panic and Destruction in Ashkelon: Residents Decry Hamas' Heaviest Rocket Barrage in Months; Ashkelon residents are still processing the aftermath of the heaviest rocket barrage fired from Gaza since fighting resumed, with 10 Hamas rockets launched and only five intercepted on Sunday, April 6. One rocket directly struck a residential neighborhood, causing significant damage. At least 27 people were treated at Barzilai Medical Center, including 17 suffering from shock. Vehicles were damaged and windows and balconies were shattered by the blast. Rocket debris also landed near Shtulim and Nir Galim. Miriam Saada, 55, was injured while rushing to shelter. "Last time, it was just panic; this time it was a catastrophe." "I heard the explosion as if it was inside the house," she added. "I fainted for a few moments. Now I'm on sick leave. I just hope we get the hostages back and the soldiers return safely. Thank God it wasn't worse." Liat Avivi Basha, 49, was also hospitalized after suffering a panic attack. "I had just finished a dancing class, didn't hear the siren properly and saw explosions overhead," she recalled. "I left my car and ran into a building. As I opened the door, a massive explosion hit. My car was shredded by shrapnel, gas was leaking, glass shattered." "A man who entered seconds after me was wounded and bleeding. I'm a nurse, so I tried to help him while checking if I was hurt myself. It felt like a horror movie — flames, explosions all around. I planned to take him to the hospital but my car was destroyed. It was terrifying." (*YNet/VFI News*)

18 Months into the War, Just 25% of Gaza Tunnels Are Destroyed; A security source on Wednesday morning, April 9, said that the IDF has destroyed around 25% of Hamas' tunnels in Gaza, Israeli media reported. According to the report, the defense echelon believes that there is a significant number of smuggling tunnels which cross from Gaza into Egypt. Earlier this year, Defense Minister Israel Katz said that the Philadelphi Corridor would remain a buffer zone, similar to those in Lebanon and Syria. "Some of them [tunnels which penetrate the Philadelphi] are closed and some are open. We had information that Hamas, during the ceasefire, planned to attack soldiers and towns." According to a last year report by a renowned American news outlet, before the massacre, Israel focused on tunnels that were dug under the border with Gaza but largely ignored the tunnels being dug entirely within Gaza, allowing Hamas to build a vast network it has used to avoid unwanted confrontations, stage ambushes, travel in secret, and hide many of the hostages who were kidnapped on October 7, 2023. Meanwhile, an IDF

inquiry into the massacre and battle in the city of Sderot on October 7, has recently given further insights on the failures that occurred that day. The findings of the inquiry team, led by Colonel Nitai Okashi—who assumed command of the city on October 8th, pointed out a lack of organization in the area near the border, several deficiencies in the city's security system, including the response team's fitness and equipment, the need for inter-organizational cooperation between the IDF and the police, and appropriate alert systems for the city's residents. Furthermore, according to the findings, 41 terrorists had infiltrated Sderot, conducting a killing spree in the streets of the city. However, thanks to determined fighting by security forces and civilians, 39 terrorists were killed in the city, and two were captured alive and arrested. (INN/VFI News)

Hostage Forum Publishes Health Report for 24 Living Hostages, Warns 'Time Is Running Out'; The Hostages and Missing Families Forum published on Monday, April 7, a medical report detailing the condition of the living hostages still held captive in Gaza, based on known medical conditions and injuries, propaganda videos published by Hamas, and testimonies from those released during the recent two-month ceasefire. The report, which the forum stressed did not provide a full depiction of the hostages' health, examined both their physical and mental state. It warned that some have been isolated for the majority of their 550 days in captivity, increasing the chances of severe psychological distress and that many of them were likely suffering from digestive problems, prolonged dehydration and serious infections. Fifty-eight of the 251 hostages seized during the Hamas-led October 7 onslaught remain in the clutches of Gazan terror groups. Hamas is also holding the body of a soldier killed during the 2014 Gaza war, bringing the total number of captives to 59. Of that number, 24 are thought to be alive. The testimonies from hostages released during the recent ceasefire from mid-January to early March reveal proof of “severe shortages of food, water and medical care, leading to malnutrition, severe weakness and the deterioration of their health,” the forum said. On top of that, they are undergoing “physical and mental torture,” it said, including “strangulation, being tied up, being hung by the legs, burns and deliberate starvation.” (TOI/VFI News)

Hosting PM, Trump Announces Direct Nuke Talks with Iran; Tehran: Indirect Dialogue Only; With Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his side, US President Donald Trump declared on Monday, April 7, that his administration was holding direct talks with Iran on its nuclear program. The assertion was quickly denied by Tehran, which did, however, acknowledge indirect talks. “If the talks aren't successful,” Trump warned, “it'll be a very bad day for Iran.” Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office after meeting Netanyahu, Trump said the talks had started and would continue on Saturday. Netanyahu, who flew unexpectedly from Budapest to DC at Trump's invitation for their meeting, appeared warily supportive of the president's initiative. Seated next to the president, Netanyahu said that if diplomacy could fully eliminate Iran's nuclear program, that would be “a good thing,” but it had to be stopped one way or another. However, one senior Iranian official diminished hopes about the talks: “Trump wants a new deal: End Iran's regional influence, dismantle its nuclear program and halt its missile work. These are unacceptable to Tehran,” the official told British media. Meanwhile, while speaking to the press alongside Netanyahu on Monday, Trump declined to commit to removing the 17% tariffs he had imposed on Israel on Monday. Israel had hoped to avoid Trump's sweeping decree last week to impose levies on global imports. Instead, it was hit with a 17% tariff despite lifting all remaining duties on US imports in a last-minute attempt to be spared. (TOI/VFI News)

Senate Confirms Mike Huckabee as US Ambassador to Israel; The US Senate voted Wednesday, April 9, to confirm former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee as US Ambassador to Israel. The vote was 53 to 46 in Huckabee's favor, with Republicans voting in favor and Democrats voting against the appointment. US President Donald Trump announced Huckabee's selection for the post on November 12, shortly after his election. Huckabee's nomination was officially filed with the Senate on February 11. A

longtime supporter of Israel, Huckabee spoke at the Israel Heritage Foundation and Arutz Sheva-Israel National News conference in Jerusalem in August of 2023, during which he described how his love for the State of Israel began with his first visit to the Jewish State in 1973. Following his nomination in November 2024, Huckabee spoke to Israeli media and described the responses he has received since he was nominated for the position. “I’ve been overwhelmed with positive responses, both here in the US as well as in Israel. It’s been an interesting mix, because I’ve had very positive responses from American Jews, from American Evangelical Christians, and from people in Israel,” said Huckabee. Among those who called him, he added, was Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu whom Huckabee noted he has known for 30 years. “He called me within an hour after the announcement was made. A phone call from Ron Dermer, whom I’ve known for many years, and from the Foreign Minister. Emails and text messages and phone calls from all over, and it’s been very positive.” (INN/VFI News)

Gazans Chant ‘ Hamas Is A Terrorist Organization’ as Protests Rock Strip for Third Consecutive Week; Hundreds of Palestinians in northern Gaza rallied against Hamas for the third consecutive week, according to local reports, chanting slogans labeling the group a “terrorist organization” and demanding an end to its rule. In the Jabaliya area of northern Gaza, hundreds of demonstrators gathered on Sunday, April 6, to protest the leadership of Hamas, echoing similar calls made over the past two weekends. Videos shared online show residents chanting, “The message is clear: Hamas is garbage,” and “Hamas is a terrorist organization.” Hamas is a designated terrorist organization by the United States, EU, and Israel. The Iran-backed terror group, which seized control of Gaza in 2007, responded by attempting to suppress the growing unrest. According to Palestinian sources, operatives from the group reportedly executed protesters involved in the rallies. The protests have surfaced after the recent torture and murder of Odai al-Rabei, a young Gazan targeted for protesting the terrorist group. As the IDF expands its military campaign, Gazans continue to demonstrate throughout the coastal enclave carrying white flags and chanting anti-Hamas slogans. The scenes mark some of the largest and most open protests against the terrorist organization since the start of the war with Israel in October 2023. (BB/VFI News)

Hamas Fears Sacrifices on Temple Mount; Official media channels of Hamas have disseminated claims that the holding of Jewish worship ceremonies on the Temple Mount constitutes a "desecration" of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. In a message published on the organization's Telegram channel, it was stated that the entire Temple Mount – according to Islamic belief – is considered an inseparable part of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and therefore any Jewish action in the place, especially sacrifices, is considered a severe violation of the site's sanctity. It was also stated that other Jewish ceremonies performed in the past, including the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, the waving of the four species during Sukkot, kneeling and prostration on the floor, and bringing religious articles into the compound all represent, according to Hamas, deliberate steps to change the status quo. Hamas claimed that sacrificing an offering on the Temple Mount, even symbolically, would conceptually turn the mosque into a Temple, thus paving the way for the practical implementation of a plan to build the Third Temple. According to the organization's announcement, the initial stages of this plan would include the division of areas of use on the Temple Mount – similar to the arrangement existing in the Cave of the Patriarchs – and afterwards, they claim, the construction itself would begin. (INN/VFI News)

China Moves to Formally End Christian Missionary Activity; The autocratic Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is imposing severe restrictions on Christian missionary activity in the country, arguing loyalty to the party usurps all other beliefs and credos. The regulations, which take effect May 1, prohibit foreigners from preaching, sharing their faith, or establishing religious organizations without official government approval, persecution.org reports. The move continues a long history of antipathy towards organized religion in the single-party state. Chinese state media claims the newly revised rules promote national security and help to protect “normal religious activities,” reportedly referring to activities run

under strict government oversight as part of state-run religious institutions. The report further outlines that the CCP claims it alone must maintain supremacy at all times: “The CCP has long viewed independent religious activity with suspicion, arguing that religious loyalty is at odds with the ultimate loyalty demanded by the Communist Party. The government labels independent religious activity as cultish and extremist, regardless of its theological roots, and demands that all Christian religious activity take place within the confines of state-run churches.” Earlier this year, the Chinese government issued a report boasting about the increased persecution of independent religious groups in 2024. “China’s public security authorities intensified efforts to dismantle cult organizations in 2024,” reported a state-run media outlet. “They have worked to curb the growth and spread of cult organizations, mitigating potential threats to national political security and maintaining social stability.” Further, in a statement on a Chinese messaging app and social media platform, China’s Ministry of Public Security boasted of increased spending on technology and manpower to combat independent religious organizations and stamp out all faiths. (*BB/VFI News*)



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