

Israel faces war of attrition as home front and morale hit hard

Amos Harel

U.S. President Donald Trump postponed the deadline for his ultimatum to Iran by 10 days – until April 6. If the sides fail to reach a compromise regarding the end of the war by then, Trump threatened to bomb power stations and energy infrastructure sites. In the meantime, the war continues in the same manner. The U.S. and Israel are hitting dozens of military, industry and regime targets across Iran every day, while Iran in turn launches a few dozen ballistic missiles and drones at Israel and the Gulf states. In the Gulf, Iran is targeting oil infrastructure and American bases. In Israel, it mostly fires at population centers, which are sometimes retroactively called military targets.

Leaders in Tehran do not seem enthusiastic about continuing the war, but are also not rushing to compromise. The current leadership partly survived the powerful blows inflicted on Iran since the war began, and it seems that Iran's new leaders believe that they still have some good bargaining chips. It's true that Iran's economy is in a dismal state, but for now it appears that it isn't enough to push Iran into agreeing to the demands posed by Trump, who continues to insult them ceaselessly. Israel sees great value in resuming attacks on Iran's national infrastructure as a pressuring tactic. The U.S. administration, for now, opposes this, partly out of concern that a total con-



Police detaining a woman at a protest against the war in Tel Aviv, Saturday evening. See story, Page 2.

Itai Ron

flagration of a destructive energy war will erupt in the Gulf. Israel's attack on a gas field in southern Iran ten days ago was the last of its kind, for now.

After almost a month of

war in the Gulf, the Houthis in Yemen have joined the battle for the first time. On Saturday, they launched a ballistic missile, a drone and a cruise missile to the country's south, without causing

any damage. However, the main risk they pose relates to the overall disruption to the global energy economy. A possible strike on a Saudi port and the blocking of maritime traffic through the

Bab al-Mandeb Strait could add to the damage caused by Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

While Trump doesn't hide his desire for a deal, he continues making preparations

for a new military operation in case the negotiations founder. The arrival of 2,500 marines in the region is part of these preparations. A large airlift continues from America to Israel and other countries in the region. The

3 reporters, 9 paramedics killed in IDF strikes in Lebanon **Page 3**

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Cluster bomb kills man; 40 families evacuated near J'lem

Bar Peleg, Josh Breiner, Ido Efrati, Nir Hasson, Eden Solomon and Yair Foldes

An Iranian cluster missile hit several sites in Tel Aviv and its vicinity late Friday, killing one man, 52, while he was at work as a security guard.

This brings the number of people who have been killed in Israel and the West Bank by direct fire from Iran and Lebanon to 23 since the start of the war, including five who were killed at their workplace.

The man killed Friday was Vyacheslav Vidmant from Ashdod. Vidmant was working as a security guard in a building that happened to also be hit by a missile on the first day of the war, wounding him. On Friday, the submunition fell about 20 meters (65 feet away from him) while he was working and he was killed by shrapnel. He was not in a shelter, Tel Aviv District Police Commander Haim Sargaroff said.

Residents had already evacuated following the strike on the first day of the war, Tel Aviv Deputy Mayor Asaf Zamir said. In that earlier incident, Mary Ann de Vera was killed.

Zamir added that there were a total of eight impact sites across Tel Aviv.

Giv'atayim Mayor Ran Kunik said that part of the cluster missile fell in the city, causing damage to several businesses but no injuries. Fire services responded to a total of 11 sites across the Dan region.

A missile strike on Moshav Eshtaol in the Jerusalem area on Saturday caused extensive damage, and around 40 families were told to evacu-

ate. Dozens of houses and cars were reported damaged, as well as a stone fence and the ceiling of a synagogue.

Two more other people were lightly wounded in southern Israel by shrapnel from an Iranian barrage. Medics said that a 37-year-old man and a 21-year-old were wounded in an unrecognized Bedouin village near the town of Kuseife.

Workers at risk

In Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Edenim, Yehud, Beit Awwa and Beit Shemesh, ten people have been killed by cluster munitions, ten by ballistic

U.S.-Israeli loss isn't Iranian win

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missiles and two by rocket fire from Lebanon. One person, Ofer Moskovitz, was killed by friendly fire along the northern border.

Emergency services also reported a total of 5,492 wounded. Of them, 116 remain hospitalized, including one in critical condition and 16 in serious condition. In addition, since the start of the campaign, four Israel Defense Forces soldiers have been killed along the Lebanese border.

In addition to Vidmant, those killed while working were de Vera, a nursing aide from the Philippines who refused to leave her patient during a siren; Rustam Golomb and Amid Mortuzov, who were working at a construction site and did not

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A residential building in southern Tehran on Friday. AFP

Israel strikes Iranian nuclear sites, steel factories

Jonathan Lis, Rawan Suleiman, Reuters and the Associated Press

Israel attacked nuclear sites and steel factories in Iran on Friday, with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi saying the attacks contradict U.S. President Donald Trump's extended deadline for diplomacy. "Israel claims it acted in

coordination with the U.S.," Araghchi wrote on X, saying that Tehran will exact a "heavy price for Israeli crimes."

U.S. Vice President JD Vance said that the U.S. has accomplished most, if not all, of its military objectives in Iran and that the United States is "going to be out" of Iran soon in a podcast interview with right-wing political

commentator Benny Johnson on Saturday.

"The president has been very clear about this: We are not interested in being in Iran a year down the road, two years down the road," he said. "We're taking care of business, we're going to be out of there soon, and gas prices are going to come back down," he continued.

The Israeli military on

Friday announced that it had struck Iran's heavy water nuclear reactor in the city of Arak, saying that the facility, located in the center of the country, was used for producing plutonium for nuclear weapons.

"The plant was struck during Operation Rising Lion," the Israel Defense Forces said, referring to Israeli strikes on the facility during

the 2025 Iran war. According to the military, "since then, repeated reconstruction attempts by the Iranian terror regime have been identified. Therefore, the IDF has now struck the facility once again." An Iranian official told the country's Fars news agency that there were no casualties in the attack.

The Arak facility was shut down in 2015 as part of the

nuclear deal with Iran. Still, the Israeli military statement said that "the Iranian terror regime has systematically avoided converting the reactor so that it would not enable the production of weapons-grade plutonium."

The IDF also announced that it had attacked a factory "used for the production of

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Five new outposts set up in 1 night

Palestinian man shot dead, 14 wounded in W. Bank settler raids

Matan Golan, Rawan Suleiman and Jack Khoury

A Palestinian resident of East Jerusalem was killed and 14 Palestinians were wounded in three separate settler attacks Thursday following the establishment of five new outposts in the West Bank, four of them in Area A, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent.

Israeli law prohibits Israeli citizens from entering Area

A, which is controlled by the Palestinian Authority, where there had previously been only one outpost reported.

According to the NGO Kerem Navot, "Establishing four outposts in Area A is unprecedented by any measure, and shows the extent to which the State of Israel has lost control not only over settlers in the West Bank, but also over the army, the police and other authorities meant to enforce the law."

"The establishment of four

outposts in a single night is extreme with very few precedents in the history of settlements," the group added.

In the West Bank village of Tayasir, residents said settlers raided the village and opened fire at young men who tried to fend them off Thursday morning. The Red Crescent said four residents were wounded, including Abdullah Daraghme, 75, who was seen bruised

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Police to discipline cop who called Ben-Gvir a 'convicted criminal'

Josh Breiner

The police will bring disciplinary charges against a police officer from the Kfar Sava station after he said that National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir was a "convicted criminal."

However, the minister has in fact been convicted of 13 criminal offenses in the past, including supporting a terror group. According to the decision of the police and Central District

commander Amir Cohen, the officer's statement was a "political statement" made in his official capacity and constituted a deviation from procedures, even though it was said among his colleagues.

The police did not provide a response.

Ben-Gvir has also admitted to committing additional criminal offenses, but the court refrained from convicting him. Among them are inciting racism, expressing

sympathy with a terror group according to the Prevention of Terror Ordinance, possessing propaganda material for a terror group, obstructing a police officer in his duties, violating a lawful order, insulting a public servant, participating in an illegal assembly, participating in a riot and defacing property.

In addition, Ben-Gvir has 79 traffic convictions. Furthermore, last week, Central

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Abusive online comments

Ben-Gvir's pick for police legal adviser could be fired



Alberto Pezzali/AP

Mysterious, Iran-linked

The terror group attacking Jewish targets in Europe

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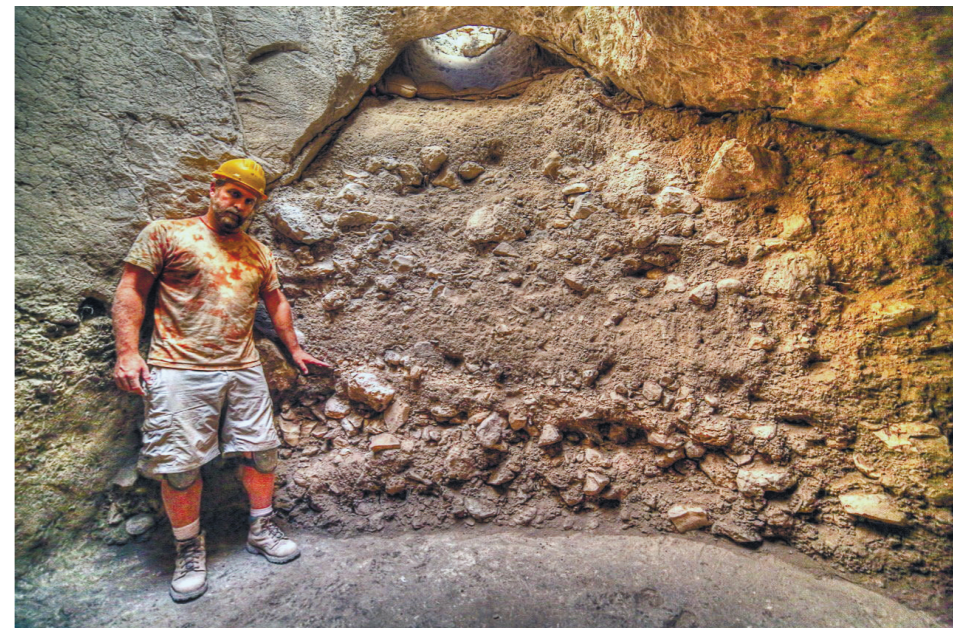
Archaeologists find 2,500-year-old mass grave of infants in Israel

Ariel David

More than a decade ago, archaeologists investigating a cistern among the ruins of Azekah, an ancient town southwest of Jerusalem, made a gruesome discovery. The millennia-old water reservoir was not only filled with broken pottery and sediment washed in during centuries of abandonment, as one would expect. It also contained dozens of skeletons of children.

This mass grave for infants, most of them less than two years old, was likely in use during the Persian Period, some 2,500 years ago. It housed the fragile, jumbled remains of up to 89 individuals, the researchers say.

The unique and unsettling find helps explain an enduring archaeological mystery about the absence of young children in burials from this period and also sheds light on the beliefs and social norms of the ancient Israelites, they say. While analysis is still ongoing, the remains don't appear to belong to victims of a massacre or a plague, a team of Israeli and German researchers reported Friday in the journal *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*. They suspect the cistern was used over decades



Inside the cistern used as a mass grave.

The Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition

to bury children who died of natural causes, in an era when infant mortality rates were very high.

Azekah is an ancient hill-top settlement overlooking the Elah Valley, probably best known as the setting for the biblical story of the duel between David and Goliath. Azekah was first settled in the Early Bronze Age, more than 4,000 years ago, and was a prosperous Canaanite town until the end of the

Bronze Age, in the 12th century B.C.E. After a period of abandonment in the Early Iron Age, it was rebuilt and incorporated into the Kingdom of Judah.

During its existence Azekah was destroyed and rebuilt multiple times and this "tell," an accumulation of superimposed layers of habitation over millennia, has been intensely investigated by researchers of the ancient Levant.

Can't touch this

Between 2012 and 2014, archaeologists excavated a cistern in the outer reaches of the town and discovered this unexpected mass burial, containing dozens of tiny skeletons, apparently accompanied by paltry grave offerings: mainly pottery and some jewelry, including beads, earrings and rings.

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