



Happy Purim | IDF soldiers read the traditional Esther Scroll of the holiday of Purim in the Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza | Source: Amit Segal on Telegram, <https://t.me/amitsegal>

## Overview

- Minister Ron Dermer, member of the War Cabinet and a close advisor to Netanyahu explained that Israel sees no option but advancing to eliminate the remaining Hamas battalions and destroy Hamas with or without American support.
- **Two Israeli delegations are expected to visit Washington this week to address Israel's pending Rafah operation and discuss the US's "preferred alternatives."**
- **Ramadan has been relatively quite so far with no major security incidents around the Temple Mount and the Al Aqsa Mosque despite persistent Hamas incitement.**
- Since the beginning of the war, approximately **3,600 wanted individuals have been arrested across the Judea and Samaria, with over 1,600 of them being associated with the terrorist organization Hamas.**
- Prime Minister Netanyahu was reportedly invited by Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, to address a joint session of Congress.
- The IDF conducted a wide operation in the Al Shifa Hospital capturing over 500 terrorists including at least 358 Hamas and PIJ affiliated members. The IDF's spokesperson said that this number includes multiple senior terrorists whose names will only become public after they are interrogated.
- **According to reports, for the first time in months, Israel and Hamas are negotiating the terms of a possible deal to release Israeli hostages in exchange a temporary ceasefire in Gaza.** Israel has accepted the US's mediation offer of the hostage-terrorist exchange rate, with different ratios of imprisoned terrorists applying to Israeli hostages who are soldiers, the elderly, etc. which have been primary bones of contention and have terminated negotiations in the past.
- **According to the latest poll by respected Palestinian pollster** Khalil Ibrahim Shikaki, 71% of Palestinians expressed satisfaction with the October 7 attack. UNRWA provides 62% of the aid. The Palestinians are sure that Hamas will prevail. The most startling statistic must have been that only 5% acknowledge that Hamas committed war crimes.
- At least five ISIS terrorists breached the "Crocus City Hall" concert venue in Krasnogorsk, Russia near in the Moscow region, opening fire on the audience - killing at least 133 people and injuring more than 140 others.



Ambassador of the West Asia and North Africa Department at the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Wang Kajian and Ismail Haniyeh | Source: Hamas West Bank on Telegram, <https://t.me/hamaswestbank1>

## International

- The March 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the *Economist* led with a haunting image of an Israeli flag planted on a desolate Gaza landscape titled "Israel Alone" signifying the growing Israeli isolation and global criticism over Israel's execution of the war in Gaza against Hamas.
- Canada announced that it would **stop supplying arms to Israel**. Practically, Canada provides very few weapons to Israel. While the motion is mostly **symbolic**, **it could encourage other countries to follow suit**. The UK is reportedly considering a similar measure. The original measure was reported to have included Canadian recognition of a Palestinian State which was removed by the Liberal Party against the demands of the hard left NDP party.
- High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, falsely claimed that **Israel is using hunger and deprivation as a weapon of war against the Palestinians without providing evidence**.
- In addition to the US, France is planning on presenting a draft resolution to the Security Council calling for an immediate ceasefire.
- **Chinese diplomat Wang Kejian met Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh** in Qatar. The Hamas statement said Haniyeh "praised the role played by China in the Security Council, the United Nations, and the International Court of Justice," referring to Beijing's recent diplomacy related to the war.
- **Spain, Ireland, Malta, and Slovenia said they would take steps to recognize a Palestinian State**.
- The British Foreign Office announced that they sent over 2,000 tons of food to the Gaza Strip. The aid was transferred through Jordan and distributed by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). Additionally, 150 tons of aid, including tents and blankets, will be distributed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Emergency Fund.

- The UK has reportedly demanded that **diplomats or Red Cross personnel be allowed to visit the detained Hamas terrorists in Israel – as part of its conditions for continuing arms supplies to Israel**. British Foreign Secretary David Cameron also warned in talks with Israeli officials that if the current situation continues as it is, a weapons embargo could be declared on Israel throughout Europe.
- The European Union has **unanimously declared sanctions against "violent settlers,"** which it assessed to involve only a few individuals. The decision is binding for all 27 EU member states. The sanctions are expected to include five settlers and the extreme right-wing organization Lehava.
- The Prime Minister of Italy, Giorgia Meloni, stated that her country opposes an IDF ground operation in the city of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, during his visit to Saudi Arabia, said that work on the **Gaza port "will begin in two weeks."**
- Approximately 70 former U.S. government officials, diplomats, and military personnel sent a letter to President Joe Biden, calling on him to warn Israel of "serious consequences" if it "continues to deny civil rights and basic necessities to the Palestinians and expands settlement activity in the West Bank."
- **19 Democratic Senators**, over a third of the Democrats in the Senate, sent a letter to President Biden urging him to take bold action regarding the conflict which includes creating a framework towards the **establishment of a Palestinian State**.



In the attack in Rafah, Syed Katab Al-Hashash, Osama Hamed Chahir, and Muhammad Uz Al-Malalhi, the heads of the emergency committees in the north and east of Rafah, were targeted. Along with them, Hadi Abu Elros, who was the operations officer of the emergency committees, was also eliminated | Source: IDF Spokesperson





## Gaza Strip Diplomatic

The US is no longer hiding its desire to prevent Israeli action in Rafah. The Administration has been increasing pressure by making statements that are framed as protecting Israel's global reputation, such as Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's warning that a large-scale maneuver in Rafah would diplomatically isolate Israel. It was not framed as a threat but rather as recommendation to protect Israeli interests. For the first time, the US issued its draft resolution for an immediate ceasefire to the UN Security Council after vetoing 3 previous resolutions calling for ceasefire. The resolution included the release of the hostages. It was vetoed by Russia and China.

Blinken came to Israel and the region for the 6<sup>th</sup> time since the start of the war to try and push for a ceasefire deal. Minister Ron Dermer, Member of the War Cabinet and a close advisor to Netanyahu explained that Israel sees an option but advancing to eliminate the remaining Hamas battalions and destroy Hamas with or without American support.

Netanyahu spoke to Biden for the first time, reportedly, in over a month. He also spoke with House Speaker Mike Johnson. Netanyahu later released a video in Hebrew outlining the main points he spoke with Biden to the Israeli public. In their talks, Biden reportedly denied any effort of his hampering Netanyahu politically. In the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Netanyahu said for the first time in an open setting

that there are disagreements between Israel and the US administration, and that it is 'no longer a secret'.

## Israeli Delegations to Washington

Two Israeli delegations are expected to visit Washington this week to address Israel's pending Rafah operation and discuss the US's "preferred alternatives." There will be separate delegations coming from Prime Minister's and Defense Minister's offices. The White House requested the meetings in to order to try and avoid an imminent clash between the U.S. and Israel. Both Biden and Netanyahu have drawn conflicting "red lines" concerning Israeli operations in Rafah.

Biden warned Netanyahu during their phone call not to start any operation before there is a clear evacuation plan for the over one million Gazans in Rafah. This was reiterated by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in a press conference, where he said that an operation would be a mistake that would cause more death, starvation, anarchy and would isolate Israel diplomatically. He added there are other ways to achieve the war aims but did not elaborate on them.

The US seeks to get assurances that Israel has plans to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza and protect civilians before a large ground operation in Rafah. In a phone call, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant that he needs to bring with him to Washington new policies and new ideas for how to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza that demonstrate that Israel is removing any roadblocks for getting aid into Gaza. Gallant updated Austin on the new crossing Israel is using to get aid into northern Gaza. Their conversation also included Gallant's ideas about the day after the war, including possible alternatives to the governance of Hamas in Gaza, a senior Israeli official said.

As for alternatives for the Rafah invasion plan, US officials said one idea is to delay a military operation in the city and focus on stabilizing the humanitarian situation in northern Gaza. Another idea is to focus in the first stage on securing Egypt's side of its border with Gaza as part of a joint U.S.-Egypt-Israel plan to destroy tunnels under the border and create infrastructure to prevent arms smuggling into Gaza. An Israeli Defense Forces official in charge of humanitarian issues will travel with them. The delegation will not include IDF officers in charge of the planning for the military operation in Rafah as the U.S. requested.

Gallant will come to Washington next week to meet with his counterpart, Secretary Austin and White House NSA Jake Sullivan. Gallant plans to come with a long list of U.S. weapons Israel wants to receive in an expedited manner. The requests will not only include short-term requests for the war in Gaza but also long-term ones,

including the option to purchase more F-35 and F-15 fighter jets. The slow pace of weapon shipments to Israel has been a concern for Israel and was even suspected as a political decision by the White House responding to domestic criticism over its support for Israel. Meanwhile, U.S. officials said there is no 'slow walking,' as the pace of weapons supply is connected to available U.S. supply and the need for Congress to approve supplemental funding.

## Blinken's Visit to the Region

**US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El Sisi of Egypt and the foreign ministers of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Jordan and the PA.** In a public statement to journalists, he said that they are working on a hostage deal and emphasized that all of the Gaza population is suffering from hunger and they view an Israeli operation in Rafah as problematic, since the civilians have nowhere to flee. An attack in Rafah would cause a "humanitarian catastrophe".

During his visit to Israel, Blinken warned Netanyahu and the Israeli war cabinet in a meeting on Friday that Israel's security and its place in the world are in peril, as on the current trajectory, without a clear plan for the day after the war, Israel would be left with a major insurgency it can't handle. "You need a coherent plan, or you're going to be stuck in Gaza," Blinken said. The Secretary of State said that on the current path, Hamas will stay in control in Gaza or there will be anarchy, which will just create the conditions for more terrorism.



An IDF soldier in the Gaza Strip | Source: IDF Spokesperson

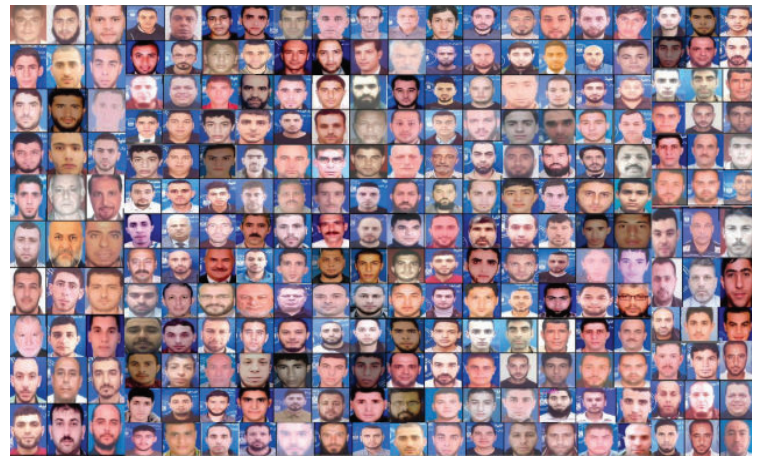
## US Congress

**Republican Senators hosted Netanyahu for a private, remote briefing.** Netanyahu gave the Senators an update on the war and Israel's determination to eliminate the last standing Hamas battalions. A spokesperson for Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) said that Netanyahu had offered to speak to the Democrats as well, but Schumer declined, saying that the conversations should not be partisan.

## Netanyahu was reportedly invited by House Speaker Mike Johnson, to address a joint session of Congress.

This would potentially be a repeat of the 2015 Netanyahu speech against the Iran deal which angered many in the Democratic Party. However, since the Democrats control the Senate, the speech could not take place without bipartisan support, which was not the case in 2015. Schumer has signaled general support of Netanyahu addressing Congress by stating that Israel "has no stronger ally than the United States and our relationship transcends any one president or any one Prime Minister", he added, "I will always welcome the opportunity for the Prime Minister of Israel to speak to Congress in a bipartisan way."

- Despite opposition from Israel, the United States decided to involve Qatar in the establishment and operation of the port off the coast of Gaza, intended for humanitarian aid to the residents of the Strip.



Photos of arrested terrorists in the large-scale IDF and Shin Bet operation in Al Shifa hospital | Source: IDF Spokesperson

## The Hostage Deal

Israel seeks an agreement that would allow it to continue maneuvering after a potential ceasefire agreement and until the **decisive destruction of Hamas' military capabilities is achieved**. Hamas seek is seeking an agreement that would enable it to end the war and release as many terrorists as possible, including those who have become **national symbols like Marwan Barghouti**, in order to re-establish its political influence after the war.

Meanwhile, Mossad Chief David Barnea returned to Israel after his visit to Qatar. The rest of the delegation including Major General Nitzan Alon is still in Qatar for what could be the last round of talks, which may last up to two weeks. Egypt and Qatar claim that this could be the **last round**, and after it, no further talks with Hamas will be planned.

CIA director, William Burns, participated in the last round of talks with Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin



Abdulrahman Al Thani, Egyptian intelligence chief Abbas Kamel, and Mossad director David Barnea in an attempt to give the negotiations a push at a critical moment. **According to reports, for the first time in months, Israel and Hamas are negotiating the terms of a possible to release Israeli hostages in exchange for a temporary ceasefire in Gaza.** The U.S. framework includes the release of 400 Palestinians convicted of terror related crimes, including 15 who are serving life sentences for murdering Israelis, in return for 40 Israeli hostages. Israel has accepted the US's mediation offer of the hostage-terrorist exchange rate, with different ratios of imprisoned terrorists applying to Israeli hostages who are soldiers, the elderly, etc. which have been primary bones of contention that have terminated negotiations in the past.

Another point of disagreement is that Hamas wants to choose the prisoners that Israel should release, including those who are serving life sentences. Israel has rejected that demand.



So far, since the beginning of the war, approximately 3,600 wanted persons have been arrested throughout the Judea and Samaria Division and the Bekaa and Emekim Division, approximately 1,600 of whom are affiliated with Hamas. | Source: IDF Spokesperson

## Operational

### The Al Shifa Operation

**The IDF conducted a wide operation in the Al Shifa Hospital capturing over 500 terrorists including at least 358 Hamas and PIJ affiliated members. The IDF's spokesperson said that this number includes multiple senior terrorists whose names will only become public after they are interrogated.** This operation comes after the first operation in Al Shifa hospital was more modest and less comprehensive than this one. The presence the large numbers of terrorists there demonstrated that the area in northern Gaza is far from being cleared and the IDF which will likely mean many more months of work in order to "root out" the terrorist foundation in Gaza.

The terrorists used Al Shifa as a base and cover, believing that the IDF would refrain from entering the premises of the facilities, another indication of the cynical use of civilian infrastructure for military purposes.

**The continued cynical use of hospitals by Hamas as command centers and hideouts for their senior officers belies the argument that Israel does not take sensitive civilian infrastructure into account while conducting the war.** Hamas has continued to see firsthand that Israel is extremely hesitant to engage in intense operations in and near hospitals, which is why Hamas continues to occupy them for their war effort. They also benefit from the additional scrutiny that the international community continues to apply on Israel from trying to cleanse the hospitals of the terrorists, while rarely condemning Hamas for using the hospital as a human shield.

There were some senior Hamas officials that were captured, some of their names have not been released. **These terrorists have been providing valuable intelligence in their interrogations.** In the combat over Al Shifa over 150 terrorists were eliminated, a testament to the IDF's advancement in the ability to destroy pockets of resistance in the north which is evident by the lower frequency of attacks against IDF forces.

- The operation was spearheaded by Commando Unit Shayetet 13 fighters with direction from the Shin Bet.
- Over 11 million NIS of terror money was found in the hospital.
- Weapons and ammunition were found throughout the hospital including in the hospital director's office.
- Reports on social media claim that IDF forces arrested senior Islamic Jihad member Khaled al-Batsh. Al-Batsh, a member of the political bureau of Islamic Jihad, is understood to be behind the economic and administrative capabilities of PIJ and might have been at the hospital to coordinate the organization's takeover of aid distribution against Hamas and the local clans.
- During the operation, following intelligence from the Shin Bet and Military Intelligence about the presence of senior Hamas officials in the hospital, the IDF and Shin Bet launched a targeted arrest operation, during which they eliminated the head of the operations administration in Hamas' internal security, Fa'ak Mabhouh. Mabhouh was responsible for among other things, coordinating Hamas' mechanisms in the Strip, in routine and combat situations.
- A tunnel 2.5 Km long from Gaza City to the camps in central Gaza was destroyed by the IDF.

According to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), satellite images of the area north of the Hamad neighborhood is effectively being flattened. Satellite images also show that within a depth of up to one kilometer from the fence along the Gaza Strip, Israel is demolishing buildings and structures to create a perimeter to prevent any future attacks. This also includes the construction of a corridor near Be'eri **approximately 7 kilometers and a width of about 350 meters, which has also required the evacuation of about 350 buildings and structures.**

These actions have reduce the Hamad area by about **16% and deemed necessary for the security of the surrounding area and the country.** This is despite American pressure **not to reduce the territory of the Strip.**



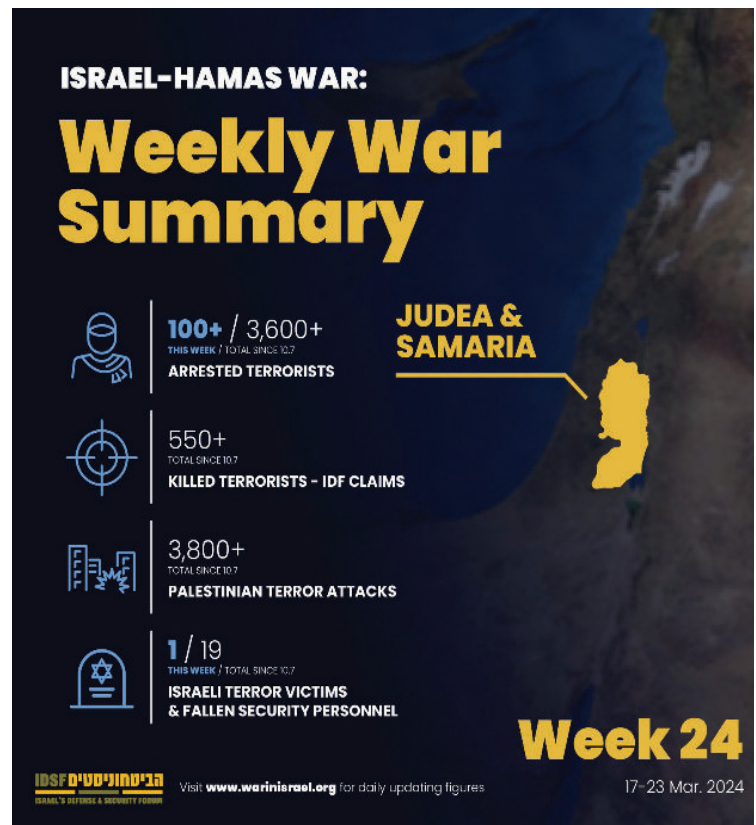
## Lebanon

### Operational

- **The Israeli Air Force hit numerous targets in southern Lebanon eliminating many Hezbollah terrorists.** A Hezbollah ammunition depot located in the heart of a civilian population was attacked, as evidenced by the secondary explosions.
- On the Syria-Lebanon border, a new territorial division in the IDF called the "Mountain Division" was established to focus on Mount Hermon and Mount Dov regions. Its activity will begin in the coming weeks, specializing in combat in mountainous and complex terrain addressing new challenges.

### Diplomatic

U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon, Lisa Johnson, delivered a clear warning to the former President of Lebanon that Israel will launch an operation to push Hezbollah back beyond the Litani River before the start of summer, in order to facilitate the return of northern Israeli residents to their homes.



## Judea and Samaria

- **Ramadan has been relatively quite so far with no major incidents around the Temple Mount and the Al Aqsa Mosque despite persistent Hamas incitement.**
- Since the beginning of the war, approximately **3,600 wanted individuals have been arrested across the Judea and Samaria, with over 1,600 of them being associated with the terrorist organization Hamas.**
- **According to the latest poll by respected Palestinian pollster Khalil Ibrahim Shikaki 71% of Palestinians expressed satisfaction with the October 7 attack.** UNRWA provides 62% of the aid. The Palestinians are sure that Hamas will prevail. The most startling statistic must have been that only 5% acknowledge that Hamas committed war crimes.
- **A terrorist from the PA's presidential guard committed a shooting attack on a bus filled with civilians. He injured a number of civilians and was eliminated after being tracked down by the Duvedevan Unit.**



Attack of Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon  
| Source: IDF Spokesperson





## Iraq and Syria

**Weapon shipments continue to flow from Iran to Syria and from Syria to Lebanon.** According to reports from Syria, Israel attacked two different sites associated with Hezbollah north of Damascus including a weapon silo.

There were 3 separate attacks in the span of 72 hours. This includes the targeted elimination of five senior Iranian Revolutionary Guards who were present at a secret meeting in the city of Deir ez-Zor. According to reports, the elimination was carried out using drones. A senior Hezbollah member present at that meeting was also eliminated. **The Israeli Air Force operates without any interference in Syria**, and there is currently no Iranian air defense system capable of interfering with the Israeli air superiority.

- A Shia Millia claimed that it shot a UAV towards Tel Aviv, but did not produce evidence supporting the claim. Another militia head Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada has stated that all of Israel's ports are legitimate targets.
- Kata'ib Hezbollah falsely claimed that they hit Ben Gurion Airport in Israel using a UAV. The leader of the militia said they stopped for the moment attacking American bases but they have not stopped their efforts in expelling the Americans from Iraq.

## Yemen

- On March 21<sup>st</sup> a German helicopter operating in the Red Sea intercepted a Houthi UAV on its way to target a German frigate. A French frigate intercepted 3 ballistic missiles launched by the Houthis to prevent damage to a civilian ship. Both actions were part of the European Union's Operation ASPIDES. The Central Command of

the American Army intercepted several Houthi attacks, while the Israeli Air Force intercepted an aerial target on its way to Israel, also initiated by the Houthis.

- A French helicopter shot down a Houthi boat in the Red Sea, marking the 9th European country to attack since February 18th, at the start of the Union's ASPIDES operation. The Houthi leader declared his intentions to attack Israeli ships or those supporting Israel in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Hope, more as an aspiration than practical, as they can only target objects up to 2,200 km away. Since January, **ship traffic in the Red Sea has decreased by about 50%**, while around the Gulf of Hope, it has increased by 74%.
- **The air forces of the US and the UK targeted 10 Houthi targets in northern Yemen, some who were directing aerial targets towards Eilat.** This is occurring after the Houthis for the first time successfully hit a site north of the city.

## Global Jihad

**At least five ISIS terrorists breached the "Crocus City Hall" concert venue in Krasnogorsk, Russia in the Moscow region, opening fire on the audience - killing at least 133 people and injuring more than 140 others.** Media reports indicated that they were "in disguise" and opened fire with automatic weapons. Additionally, an explosion was reported at the start of the incident, followed by a second explosion about half an hour later.

After an extensive manhunt for the escaping terrorists, 11 suspects were arrested, four of whom are suspected of carrying out the attack themselves.

ISIS's Khorasan province claimed responsibility for the attack. The Amaq news agency, associated with ISIS, published footage of the terrorists pledging their allegiance.

## Iran

- The Higher Regional Court in Düsseldorf (OLG) published its verdict on the **2022 attempted arson of the synagogue in Bochum, determining that "the state agencies of the Islamic Republic of Iran ordered the attack."** Following the decision, the German Foreign Ministry summoned the Iranian Ambassador for a reprimand. This decision **could serve as the basis for a future decision by the European Union Council to include the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran in its list of terrorist organizations.**
- In a letter to the UN Security Council, Iran's UN ambassador, Saeid Iravani, rejected the claims regarding Iran's support for the Houthis. He stated that representatives of the USA and Britain had misused the Security Council, which had condemned the Houthi attacks, and raised baseless claims against Iran. According to him, the accusations against Iran were intended to advance the political agenda of the USA and Britain and to provide legitimacy for their illegal actions against Yemen.



A Hamas poster inciting for terrorism against Jews. The text reads, "One resistant turns around an entire army!! Since 5:15 am the occupation forces are still dealing with one resistance fighter in Ramallah. This action resulted in 7 casualties among his soldiers, including serious injuries!" | Source: Mithaq on Telegram, <https://t.me/MithaqMedia>



Four IDF soldiers fell this week: Warrant officer Sebastian Haion, Staff sergeant Matan Vinogradov, Sergeant major Ilay David Garfinkel, and Staff Sergeant Lior Raviv Of Blessed Memory