



## Red Cross, Egypt, Hamas search for hostage bodies in IDF-controlled Gaza

Rawan Suleiman, Yaniv Kubovich, Ben Samuels and Jonathan Lis

Israel is allowing Red Cross and Egyptian teams on the Israeli-controlled side of the Israel Defense Forces' yellow line in Gaza to expand humanitarian access in the area, a government spokesperson said Sunday. Additionally, with Israel's approval, Hamas operatives are accompanying Red Cross teams to search for hostage bodies in Rafah, which lies on the Israeli-controlled side of the yellow line. The government approved an Egyptian team to bring heavy equipment into the Gaza Strip and join the search efforts. The IDF said its forces withdrew from the area where the searches are taking place to avoid clashes with the Egyptians.

Search efforts are also being conducted in the Khan Yunis area, which is not under IDF control. An Israeli official expressed hope the decision will allow the recovery of additional hostage bodies "soon," since the searches are based on specific information provided by Hamas and Israel about hostage burial sites.

A government spokesman said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "approved the entry of the technical team," adding that "Israel will maintain security control in the Strip."

Rotem Cooper, the son of slain hostage Amiram Cooper, revealed on Saturday some of what Israel knows about Hamas' efforts to re-



Palestinians watching workers from Egypt searching for the bodies of hostages at Hamad City, in Khan Yunis, Sunday.

Jehad Alshreff/AP

turn the bodies of the 13 final hostages in Gaza.

"Hamas started to talk about Amiram Cooper over a week ago. We understood that they are digging in the right place," Cooper said in an interview with Kan 11.

The head of Hamas' negotiating team, Khalil

al-Hayya, said that forces from the organization will enter new areas in the Gaza Strip to search for additional bodies of hostages that have not yet been found, in an interview with Al Jazeera on Saturday.

"Israel will not be given an excuse to resume the

war," he said during the interview. He also said Hamas has "no objection" to any national figure living in Gaza managing the Strip, emphasizing that the organization will transfer all administrative powers in Gaza to the administration committee - including

in matters of security.

Al-Hayya addressed the issue of Hamas' disarmament, saying that the organization's weapons "stem from the occupation and Israeli aggression." He said, "If the occupation ends, the weapons will pass into the hands of the state."

He noted that the issue is still being discussed with other Palestinian factions and mediators, and that talks are still in the early stages. "Hamas will not accept a position that is not agreed upon at the national

See SEARCH, Page 2

doesn't know what will become of the territory. And it's impossible to know that as long as Hamas hasn't decided what role it wants to play in Gaza and what will happen to its weapons.

The Americans' idea - that an Arab-Muslim force would fight Hamas, plain and simple - currently has no basis in reality. Foreign countries are willing to send peacekeeping troops, a kind of enhanced police force that would demonstrate a presence and hand out flowers, candy and maybe a few traffic tickets. But that's it. They have no

## 'Board of Peace' far from liftoff, if at all

When the plan was launched, the thinking in Washington was that the so-called "Board of Peace," which was supposed to take over Gaza's administration, would be set up within a month. After a week packed with diplomatic discussions by special envoy Steve Witkoff, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, it is clear that the board's establishment is still far off.

Consequently, the formation of an international stabilization force to fight Hamas has been postponed indefinitely, and doubts are beginning to arise as to whether it will ever exist at all.

The root of the problem lay in the way Trump's plan was unveiled. It was half-baked, lacking many details, and it was shoved down both Hamas' and Israel's throats as if they were geese to be fattened. But the other problem is Hamas.

The Board of Peace hasn't been formed, because no country has any interest in committing money to Gaza when it

## Hostage families vilified online

Analysis, Page 4

intention of going tunnel to tunnel and house to house (at least in those houses that remain) or waging street battles with Hamas.

Hamas is still popular in the Arab street. And no Arab or Muslim country wants to be seen as an agent of Western imperialism suppressing heroes of the Islamic nation.

Indonesia, which promised thousands of soldiers, has turned out to be a weak reed, the country's president, Prabowo Subianto, is viewed as an unstable person who could declare nuclear war on Israel and announce a peace deal with it on the very same day. Egypt doesn't want to get more deeply embroiled in Gaza. The United Arab

See PEACE, Page 2

## Egypt aims for more than symbolic role in Gaza

Zvi Bar'el

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi has cause for satisfaction. His original plan, the one presented in February, is evolving into the framework for the mechanisms by which the Gaza Strip is to be governed.

After talks hosted and

headed by Egyptian intelligence chief Hassan Rashad, on Thursday, the Palestinian factions, led by Fatah and Hamas, agreed to transfer control of the Strip to a committee of technocrats composed of residents of Gaza.

This means that the civil-

ian components of Trump's 20-point plan, at least, enjoys widespread institutional and organizational Palestinian legitimacy that could eventually be extended to military actions that include the deployment of a multinational force: Arab countries conditioned their participation in such a force on an "invitation" or the establishment of a Palestinian

source of authority for the force's activity in Gaza.

The news comes a little more than a week after Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty told The Associated Press that 15 Palestinian technocrats had been selected for the apolitical committee that is to administer postwar Gaza, adding that all Palestinian factions, including Hamas,

had approved the list - as did Israel.

The fact that Friday's announcement was Palestinian and not Egyptian is important because PLO Vice President Hussein al-Sheikh and Palestinian intelligence chief Majed Faraj participated in the talks in Egypt as representatives of the Palestinian Authority and not as representatives

of Fatah or the PLO.

This means that Egypt is sponsoring a parallel political framework, a sort of "Supreme Palestinian Council," being created by Hamas, the Palestinian Authority and the other factions. This could dictate the character, the composition and the activities of Gaza's

See ROLE, Page 2



Egypt hosting Arab and U.S. delegates.

Khaled Desouki/AFP

## Attempt to 'shield premier from law'

### AG slams bill that would allow Knesset to delay PM's trial

Noa Shpigel

A key Israeli government committee was set to discuss on Sunday a bill that would allow lawmakers to delay Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's criminal trial, along with a series of bills promoting the government's overhaul of the judicial system.

The committee's discussions are taking place amid a boycott by the government's ultra-Orthodox parties, which has severely curtailed the coalition's legislation efforts.

Sponsored by far-right MK Limor Son Har-Melech, the bill would allow the Knesset House Committee to delay legal proceedings against government members.

"At any time after an indictment has been filed and before a verdict is reached," the bill proposes, "the Knesset House Committee may suspend the legal proceedings against the prime minister or a government minister, if it deems it necessary. Once such a notice is submitted, the court shall halt the proceedings in that trial."

Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara stated that the proposed law allows

political considerations to interfere with the criminal justice process, and called it "personal legislation intended to shield the prime minister from the law."

"It undermines the foundations of Israel's democratic system, is unconstitutional and should not be advanced," Baharav-Miara added.

## Campaign of destruction

Editorial, Page 5

About two weeks ago, Justice Minister Yariv Levin announced that he would promote a bill proposed by Likud MK Ariel Kallner that would allow the justice and defense ministers to control the pace of criminal proceedings when deemed necessary.

However, despite Levin's statement, the bill submitted to the Knesset last week does not appear on the Ministerial Committee for Legislation's agenda this week.

Ministers are also set to discuss another bill proposed by Likud MK Moshe Saada and several other co-

alition lawmakers, stating that when a state of war is declared, no inquiry or investigation may be opened against a soldier until the fighting ends, unless approved by the IDF chief of staff. The proposal makes exceptions for a limited number of "particularly severe offenses" for which investigations could still be launched.

In the explanatory notes, the sponsors wrote that during such a prolonged period of combat, "especially when it involves friction with a civilian population, various complaints may be filed against soldiers for actions carried out in the line of duty." They added that "we often hear of soldiers who hesitate to fully carry out their missions for fear of prosecution, stemming from excessive legal scrutiny that fails to grasp or take into account the extreme conditions soldiers face in wartime."

Also on the agenda is a bill proposed by Likud MK Avichay Buaron, which would make the leader of a new political party personally responsible for the

See AG, Page 4

## HAARETZ

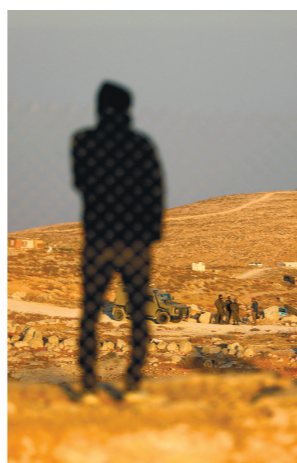
Online now

### A new culture wars movie

Julia Roberts stacks the odds too heavily on one side

### Trump's paradox

Opposing West Bank annexation in words only



Wisam Hashlamoun/Anadolu via AFP

haaretz.com

## Integration of Arabs and Haredim into higher ed falls short of target

Lior Dattel

The Israeli academic school year opened Sunday, as government efforts to integrate more Arab Israeli students into higher education and increase ultra-Orthodox Jewish participation in academia have faltered.

According to data from Israel's Council for Higher Education, the growth in student enrollment has slowed. This year, 336,500 students are expected to attend institutions of higher learning - an increase of only about 2,000 from last year - while the number of first-year undergraduates has risen by just 1,000. Roughly half of all students will study at publicly funded, private and teacher-training colleges, while the rest will attend universities.

The council's data indicates that the top fields of undergraduate study are engineering (17.7 percent), social sciences (17.2 percent) and education (17.2 percent), with no change from last year. Around 4.5 percent were enrolled in the humanities.

In contrast, enrollment in computer science declined from a peak of 7,277



The Hebrew University in Jerusalem last year.

Olivier Flioussi

first-year students in 2023 to 6,219 last year - a 14 percent drop. On the upside, the number of first-year medical students rose significantly over the past decade, although they still make up only 1.2 percent of all undergraduates. Admission to medical schools continues to be the most competitive track.

Bar Ilan is second largest, Reichman the smallest. The largest traditional

universities in Israel (excluding the Open University) were Tel Aviv University with 26,600 students (18.0 percent), Bar-Ilan University with 21,600 (14.9 percent), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with 21,500 (14.8 percent) and the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology with 14,100. Bar-Ilan enrolment is up 30 percent since 2017.

The smallest universities are Ariel University in

the West Bank, with 11,000 students, and the private Reichman University in Herzliya, with 9,505 students. The latter posted the highest growth among all universities since 2017, up 60 percent. Around 1,500 students are enrolled at the Weizmann Institute of Science, which does not offer undergraduate degrees.

The Central Bureau of Statistics

See TARGET, Page 4