



# **SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

**News Articles for Episode 259**

# [Three rockets fired from Syria, IDF retaliates | 7 ערוץ \(israelnationalnews.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #syria, #israel, #rockets

Apr 9, 2023

Three rockets launched from Syrian territory towards Israeli territory. Two of them cross into Israeli territory, one intercepted.

Three rockets were launched from Syrian territory towards Israeli territory overnight Saturday.

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit said that two of the rockets crossed into Israeli territory. One fell in open areas, while the second one was intercepted by the IDF Aerial Defense Array.

In response, IDF Artillery struck the area in Syria from which the rockets were launched.

In addition, an IDF UAV struck the launchers in Syria from which rockets were launched into Israeli territory.

Later, IDF fighter jets struck additional targets in Syrian territory, including a military compound of the Fourth Division of the Syrian Armed Forces, military radars systems and artillery posts used by the Syrian Armed Forces.

“The IDF sees the State of Syria responsible for all activities occurring within its territory and will not allow any attempts to violate Israeli sovereignty,” said the IDF Spokesperson's Unit.

Following the launches, sirens were sounded in the towns of Natur and Avnei Eitan in the northern Golan Heights. There were no reports of physical injuries or damages as a result of the rocket fire.

On Saturday evening, [three rockets were launched from Syria](#) into Israeli territory.

According to the IDF, one of the rockets crossed into Israeli territory and landed in open areas in the southern Golan Heights.

Missile warning sirens were sounded, but the IDF did not launch interceptors in accordance with the policy.

On Thursday, Hamas terrorists launched over 30 rockets from south Lebanon into northern Israel. Two Israelis were wounded by shrapnel from the rocket attacks. In addition, terrorists in Gaza fired numerous rockets into Israel.

In response to the rocket fire, the IDF on Friday struck targets, including terror infrastructures belonging to the Hamas terrorist organization in southern Lebanon.

# [Israel seeks US support for IDF buildup as expert predicts Iran strike - Israel News - The Jerusalem Post \(jpost.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #idf, #iran

Apr 14, 2023

The IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate informed the upper echelon on Thursday that Israel was closer to war than to a restoration of calm.

A top defense official sought United States support to bolster IDF forces as a security expert on Thursday predicted that Israel might have to strike Iran within the year to halt its [nuclear program](#).

“We held important meetings to promote significant projects focused on force buildup in the face of emerging security challenges – first and foremost, the [Iranian nuclear program](#),” Defense Ministry Director-General Maj.-Gen. (ret.) Eyal Zamir said.

He spoke after a meeting with US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Colin Kahl in Washington, which took place as Israel remains in danger of an immediate war on one or all of three borders – Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria – after rockets were launched during the last week against Israel from all three fronts.

The IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate informed the upper echelon on Thursday that Israel was closer to war than to a restoration of calm, according to a report in Walla.

KAN News reported that the IDF is strengthening its air defense systems throughout the country, but that in an unusual way, it was orienting [Iron Dome batteries](#) in the direction of Lebanon and Syria, rather than keeping them focused more primarily on Gaza.

## **'We need to prepare for the war'**

Former national security adviser Maj.-Gen. Yaakov Amidror warned against the dangers that Israel faced, both from Iran and from its two northern borders of Syria and Lebanon, in an interview he gave to Radio 103FM.

“We need to prepare for the war” for which the main component of the preparation would be the ability to execute a long-distance attack, Amidror said, adding that this was particularly important with respect to Iran.

“It could be that within the next year, we would get to the point where we would have to strike Iran to stop its nuclear program,” Amidror stated.

Israel would do this, even if it had to act alone without the United States, the former national security adviser said, explaining that it would likely receive arms and funding from Washington. The IDF has never relied on US involvement in such a strike and has planned to resolve its own security issues, he said.

“There is no need to change that” kind of self-reliance, Amidror explained.

He also warned against a pending war with the Iranian proxy group Hezbollah in Lebanon.

There would be a lot of damage to the home front in such a war with the Lebanese terrorist group, Amidror said.

These are “two completely different wars,” but for each one, the IDF has to be “very well prepared” given that they could break out in the next year, he explained.

Israel’s military deterrence has taken a hit as a result of the domestic turmoil over the judicial overhaul program, Amidror said. He referenced specifically the phenomenon of reservist soldiers who have threatened not to serve as a protest statement.

“The world looks at the State of Israel differently,” the major general said, adding that this was particularly true concerning nearby countries.

“They do not understand how it can be that within the State of Israel, there are threats to dismantle the military capability. This is how they understand the refusal movement of those who oppose the [judicial] reform.”

In an interview with Channel 14 on Thursday night, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that “if it’s up to me, Iran will not have nuclear weapons,” noting that Iran’s nuclear weapons program was advancing.

“We will not let the Ayatollahs stop Jewish history. We will do everything that we need to do to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. We will do everything that we need to do alone or with others,” he said, “but if we need to fight alone, we will do that.”

Netanyahu said that Israel’s enemies should not make the mistake of thinking that the domestic turmoil had weakened the Jewish state, noting that it had executed effective counter-strikes for all the rocket attacks against it.

He spoke specifically about the attempt by Hamas to launch rockets against Israel from bases in Lebanon.

“Hamas will not open a new front in Lebanon,” he said

“We are always prepared for a war,” the prime minister said, adding that Israel was so braced for it that if there was a measurement for such things, it would be 360 degrees of preparation.

“We are operating in all fronts and showing our enemies that... it is not a good idea to open a war with Israel,” Netanyahu said.

In Washington, Zamir spoke with Kahl about ways to strengthen Israel’s Qualitative Military Edge, according to the Defense Ministry. He was also slated to meet with officials in the Pentagon and the State Department.

Zamir said that in his Washington talks, “I expressed the Israel Defense Ministry’s appreciation for the American government’s unwavering commitment to the State of Israel and its national defense and for ensuring Israel’s qualitative military edge in the region.”

In Iran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp staged parades against Israel on Thursday, in advance of Friday’s annual Al-Quds day, which calls for the liberation of Palestine, specifically Jerusalem from Israeli “occupation.”

Additional rallies are planned on Friday.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry called to “terminate the savage crimes of Zionists.”

The crimes of the “usurper Zionist regime [and] organized [and] blatant violation of the primary principles of human rights [and] established rules [and] regulations of int’l law as well as desecrating religious [and] Islamic sanctities and in particular the Al-Aqsa Mosque make it an urgent necessity for Muslims to get united and consolidated once again and support the heroic resistance of the Palestinian nation,” the Iranian Foreign Ministry said.

# [Egypt planned to covertly send Russia 40,000 rockets - Pentagon papers - The Jerusalem Post \(jpost.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #russia, #egypt, #rockets

Apr 11, 2023

The leaked document said that Egypt planned to keep the rockets a secret to avoid problems with Western allies.

Egyptian President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi instructed that 40,000 rockets should be made and secretly shipped to Russia, *The Washington Post* reported on Monday night, citing the [leaked Pentagon documents](#).

According to the report, Sisi told Egyptian military officials to keep the rockets a secret so as to avoid problems with the West.

“Egypt’s position from the beginning is based on noninvolvement in this crisis and committing to maintain equal distance with both sides, while affirming Egypt’s support to the UN charter and international law in the [UN General Assembly](#) resolutions,” Egypt’s Foreign Ministry’s spokesman Ahmed Abu Zeid told *The Washington Post* in response. “We continue to urge both parties to cease hostilities and reach a political solution through negotiations,” he said.

Egypt’s votes in the UN regarding the Russia-Ukraine war have been either neutral or in support of the end of the war. The country abstained from a UNGA vote last April to suspend Russia from the UNGA but voted in favor of a vote demanding the end of the war.

As Egypt is an ally of the US in [the Middle East](#), the supplying of rockets to Russia would be seen as a problem if true.

“If it’s true that Sisi is covertly building rockets for Russia that could be used in Ukraine, we need to have a serious reckoning about the state of our relationship,” Senator Chris Murphy told *The Washington Post*.

## **What happened in the leak?**

The document was one of many classified items to have been leaked from the Pentagon. The documents covered a variety of subjects and were published on multiple social media platforms including as Twitter, Telegram and Discord.

The documents revealed information on the Ukraine-Russia war, as well as issues relating to the US and various allies such as Israel, South Korea and the UK.

# [Biometrics-Based Payments Pilot | J.P. Morgan \(jpmorgan.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #biometrics, #banks, #payments

Mar 23, 2023

Biometrics payments to bring speed and efficiency benefits to U.S. merchants and their customers, as J.P. Morgan Payments bolsters broader offering to merchants with Commerce Solutions launch.

J.P. Morgan will begin piloting biometrics-based payments with select retailers in the U.S. This is the first pilot solution to launch from J.P. Morgan Payments' new Commerce Solutions suite of products, dedicated to helping merchants adapt to the rapidly evolving payments landscape.

Its biometrics-based payment pilot includes palm and face identification for payments authentication in-store and works on an enrol-capture-authenticate-pay basis. Global biometric payments are expected to reach \$5.8T and 3B users by 2026, according to Goode Intelligence.

J.P. Morgan Payments' biometrics pilot offering should allow for fast, secure and simple checkout experiences for its merchants' customers, delivering a modern payments experience to enhance customer loyalty. As the leading global merchant acquirer, J.P. Morgan Payments is uniquely positioned to enable this solution to meet shopper expectations without compromising security and reliability.

Jean-Marc Thienpont, Head of Omnichannel Solutions, J.P. Morgan Payments said, "At its heart, biometrics-based payments empowers our merchant clients to deliver a better customer payment experience. We are a trusted payments provider and financial institution worldwide, and fully equipped to manage the highly secure identification points that power biometrics solutions. The evolution of consumer technology has created new expectations for shoppers, and merchants need to be ready to adapt to these new expectations."

The first pilots will be run with brick-and-mortar stores in the U.S., and potentially includes the Formula 1 Crypto.com Miami Grand Prix, which is planning to be the first Formula 1 race to pilot biometrics-based payments to provide guests with a faster checkout experience.

"We're delighted to work with J.P. Morgan Payments for this exciting and innovative technology," said Ramon M Peneda, VP & Chief Information Officer of Formula 1 Crypto.com Miami Grand Prix 2023. "Formula 1 prides itself on pioneering solutions and state-of-the-art technology and being able to roll out this new biometrics-based payments scheme would enhance the race-day experience for our guests as they will enjoy a new, faster checkout process. Our mission at the Miami International

Autodrome is to offer our guests a best-in-class experience and this offering helps us deliver on that commitment."

If the pilot stage is successful, a wider rollout would be planned to U.S. merchant clients in 2024.

### **How do biometrics-based payments work?**

After a short customer enrolment process in store, the workflow is; cashier scans items or customer uses self-service terminal, user scans palm or face, user completes checkout, user gets receipt. The solutions has a benefits for merchants and their consumers. For merchants, the key benefits include customer sales and loyalty growth and the removal of friction from merchants' day-to-day processes. For the customer, the payments are phone-free, private, secure, fast and simple.

### **New J.P. Morgan Payments Commerce Solutions strategy**

J.P. Morgan Payments has also launched Commerce Solutions, its next-generation suite of payments infrastructure and applications that helps merchants accept consumer and b2b payments across any touchpoint. The Commerce Solutions launch includes new cloud-based infrastructure for J.P. Morgan Payments' online and in-store payments APIs, allowing for new tools for developers and technical buyers to discover and deploy J.P. Morgan Payments solutions.

Merchants can struggle to keep up and manage a complex technology ecosystem that includes online payments, in app payments, social payments, in store payments, digital wallets and marketplace payments. J.P. Morgan Payments' Commerce Solutions will best serve its merchant clients, acting as one-front-door for the needs of its commerce and ecommerce clients in this evolving payments environment. Whether it be a biometrics solutions or better coordination of online and instore payments, the Commerce Solutions offering can help merchant clients end-to-end and prepare for the future.

Takis Georgakopoulos, Global Head of Payments, J.P. Morgan said, "The evolution of consumer technology has created new expectations for shopping and payments. There are more ways to pay than ever before across an increasing number of channels. And consumers continue to adopt tools like digital wallets and biometric payments to simplify their payment experience. J.P. Morgan is uniquely positioned to revolutionize payments online and instore and our investments in technology have unlocked new ways for merchants to offer frictionless payments across any touchpoint. Our Commerce Solutions launch positions us perfectly to help our clients prepare and thrive as the payments landscape continues to transform."



# [The US administration seeks regime change in Israel | ערוץ 7 \(israelnationalnews.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #america, #israel, #change

Apr 5, 2023

The Biden Administration has jumped into the Israeli domestic political controversy by supporting the small (but well-funded and very loud) minority of radical anti-Israel progressive-left parties.

Israel and the U.S. are going through tumultuous times. In both countries, the gap between the Right and Left has dramatically widened, aided by foreign power interference.

In Israel, on November 1st, 2022, the centrist Likud party, headed by Benjamin Netanyahu and a coalition of other like-minded and religious parties, [won the election](#) with a majority of 64 of the 120 Knesset members. They tossed out the 56 members of the left-leaning coalition, including the Arab parties (who deny Israel's right to exist), headed by the incompetent and corrupt former Prime Minister Yair Lapid.

After decades of the power grabbing and abuse of laws by the Supreme Court and the Attorney General, the Israeli voters had enough. After four inconclusive elections, they voted decisively for the Likud coalition, which ran on a platform of reforming the corrupt legal system, especially the lawlessness and [“dictatorship of the \(Supreme\) court”](#), (so defined by Nobel laureate Prof. Israel Aumann).

Today, the Court's fifteen judges can veto everything the legislative (Knesset) and the executive (Government) decide, and the Attorney General acts as a prosecutor and a judge. The [unelected judiciary](#) has constantly interfered with the elected legislature, canceling laws, and even blocking the Prime Minister from governing.

In Israel, as in the U.S. when the Republicans and Donald Trump won the 2016 election, the Left, who lost the election, went into high gear to overthrow Netanyahu and the Likud, similar to the Democrats when they tried to depose Trump (four years of the Russia hoax).

In December 2022, the Netanyahu government began to fulfill its campaign promise to reform the legal system. Immediately, the Left's opposition parties began challenging Netanyahu's government, not through debates in the Knesset, but through non-stop incitement and fear-propaganda in the mostly left-leaning media and, organizing well-funded protests, illegally closing major roads, pressuring reserve military officers in essential units, urging medical staff to strike, and even closing down the country's airports.

The leading Leftist groups, such as One Voice, V15, and Movement for Quality Government. received [funding from the U.S. State Department](#) and Progressive-Left American and European NGOs. Condoned by the Biden Administration, the minority Left in Israel successfully used fearmongering and outright lies to paralyze the country and ratchet-up division among the populace.

The [Left wants to maintain judicial control](#) over the Prime Minister and the Knesset. The centrists wish for a more equal and balanced relationship between the Judiciary, the Executive, and the Legislative branches, as, for example, in the United States.

The Biden Administration [has jumped into the Israeli domestic political controversy](#) by supporting the small (but well-funded and very loud) minority of radical anti-Israel progressive-left parties. The administration supports those parties in Israel which lost the election, encouraging those minority parties to resist negotiating with the majority government. They have been creating civil unrest and chaos. Moreover, the Biden Administration is condoning the opposition's revolt against judicial reform, which, if passed, would actually move Israel perhaps halfway toward the U.S. constitutional model.

Biden and Netanyahu meet, January 13, 2014Flash 90

Why is the Administration doing this? Why is it opposing the democratically elected government of Israel as it is trying to implement the platform on which it won the fair election? Why didn't Biden congratulate Netanyahu until very recently and invite him to the White House as has always been done in the past? Why did the Administration shun Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich when he visited D.C.? How did U.S. ambassador to Israel Thomas Nides dare to say about Smotrich, who was flying to the U.S., "He has a flight to Washington, and if I could, I would throw him off the plane!" Why was Nides not fired? Why is the Administration seeking regime change in its most loyal ally, Israel, the only real functioning democracy in the Middle East?

The reason for the Biden Administration's outrageous behavior is that PM Netanyahu is devoted to protecting the national security of Israel and its orbit of relatively friendly Arab countries of Egypt, Jordan, and the four Muslim states who joined Israel in the Abraham Accord. This accord simultaneously protects the interests of the U.S., Israel, and its Arab allies. The coalition represents a strong bulwark against the imperialist and Islamist policies of Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood supporting countries, Qatar and Turkey..

The Netanyahu government is also standing strong against creating a Palestinian-terrorist state, knowing that Iran and its proxy armies would quickly take it over. Netanyahu's centrist government is acting in the mutual interests of Israel and the U.S.

So, what is the problem? Why is the Administration seeking regime change of an ally that protects American interests? Why? Because the Progressive-Left Biden administration has abandoned American interests! The same administration that:

- gave Afghanistan to China, leaving behind more than \$80 billion worth of weapons;
- dragged its feet when Russia attacked Ukraine; deserted Saudi Arabia to China;
- and shut down America's oil fields only to buy oil from its enemy, Venezuela;
- opened wide our southern and northern borders open to a colossal invasion by millions of illegal migrants, including many thousands of criminals and an unknown number of terrorists;
- facilitated the smuggling of tons of illicit arms and drugs, including heroin, cocaine, and fentanyl, that has been poisoning and killing hundreds of thousands of Americans every year;
- and never complained to China about the death of more than one million Americans by the COVID-19 virus from the Wuhan Institute of Virology.
- The administration is now once again pushing for the establishment of a Palestinian terror state in Israel's heartland.

Finally, the Biden Administration also does nothing to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons, as Iran promises to kill everyone in the U.S. (Death to America, the Big Satan) and Israel (Death to Israel, the small Satan).

Netanyahu's government has vowed to stop Iran, in order to protect the safety of Israel, the United States, and the whole western world.

Is this why the Biden Administration wishes to depose Netanyahu? Does the administration not want to protect the United States from the existential threat of a nuclear Iran?

Welcome to the Twilight Zone!

# [China military 'ready to fight' after drills near Taiwan | AP News](#)

#bibleprophecy, #china, #taiwan, #rumorsofwar

Apr 11, 2023

China's military declared Monday it is "ready to fight" after completing three days of large-scale combat exercises around Taiwan that simulated sealing off the island in response to the Taiwanese president's trip to the U.S. last week.

The "combat readiness patrols" named Joint Sword were meant as a warning to self-governing Taiwan, which China claims as its own, China's military said earlier.

"The theater's troops are ready to fight at all times and can fight at any time to resolutely smash any form of 'Taiwan independence' and foreign interference attempts," it said Monday.

The exercises were similar to ones conducted by China last August, when it launched missile strikes on targets in the seas around Taiwan in retaliation for then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, but have been smaller and less disruptive.

Military experts say the exercises serve both as intimidation and as an opportunity for Chinese troops to practice sealing off Taiwan by blocking sea and air traffic, an important strategic option the Chinese military might pursue in the event it uses military force to take Taiwan.

The Chinese actions follow President Tsai Ing-wen's delicate mission to shore up Taiwan's dwindling diplomatic alliances [in Central America](#) and boost its U.S. support, a trip capped with a sensitive meeting with U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy [in California](#). A U.S. congressional delegation also met with Tsai over the weekend in Taiwan after she returned.

White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby reiterated the position of President Joe Biden's administration that Tsai's transit through the U.S. and the congressional visit to Taiwan were not out of the norm. Tsai transited through the United States six times between 2016 and 2019.

"There was no reason to react in any way militarily," he said. "There's no reason for tensions across the Taiwan Strait to devolve into any kind of conflict."

China responded immediately to the McCarthy meeting by imposing a [travel ban and financial sanctions](#) against those associated with Tsai's U.S. trip and with increased military activity through the weekend.

"China wants to use any increase of diplomatic interactions between the U.S. and Taiwan as an excuse to train its military," said Kuo Yu-jen, a defense studies expert and director of the Institute for National Policy Research in Taiwan.

Beijing says contact between foreign officials and the island's democratic government encourages Taiwanese who want formal independence, a step China's ruling Communist Party says would lead to war. The sides split in 1949 after a civil war, and the Communist Party says the island is obliged to rejoin the mainland, by force if necessary.

After Pelosi visited Taiwan, China conducted missile strikes on targets in the seas around Taiwan, while also sending warships and war planes over the median line of the Taiwan Strait. It also fired missiles over the island itself which landed in Japan's exclusive economic zone, in a significant escalation.

The live-fire exercises disrupted flights and shipping in one of the busiest shipping lanes for global trade. This time, shipping and maritime traffic have largely continued as normal, Kuo said.

The exercises this time have focused more on air strength, with Taiwan reporting more than 200 flights by Chinese warplanes in the past three days. Chinese state broadcaster CCTV, citing the People's Liberation Army, said the exercises are "simulating the joint sealing off" of Taiwan as well as "waves of simulated strikes" at important targets on the island.

On Monday, the PLA said its Shandong aircraft carrier was taking part in the exercises encircling Taiwan for the first time. It showed a video of a fighter jet taking off the deck of the ship in a post on Weibo, the social media platform.

The appearance of the Shandong aircraft carrier in the Pacific Ocean suggests that it could be used to prevent foreign militaries from coming to help Taiwan, said Han Gan-ming, a research fellow at the government-backed Institute for National Defense and Security Research.

"In the future if there's a similar military maneuver, then Taiwan will have to face it alone," Han said.

Between 6 a.m. Sunday and 6 a.m. Monday, a total of 70 planes were detected and half crossed the median of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary once tacitly accepted by both sides, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense. Among the planes that crossed the median were eight J-16 fighter jets, four J-1 fighters, eight Su-30 fighters and reconnaissance planes. Taiwan also tracked J-15 fighter jets, which are paired with the Shandong aircraft carrier.

By Monday evening, Taiwan's defense ministry reported another 91 flights by bombers, as well as multiple fighter jets, early warning aircraft and military transport planes.

That followed a full day between Friday and Saturday in which eight warships and 71 planes were detected near Taiwan, according to the island's Defense Ministry. It said in a statement that it was approaching the situation from the perspective of "not escalating conflict, and not causing disputes."

Taiwan said it monitored the Chinese moves through its land-based missile systems, as well as from its own navy vessels.

China's military harassment of Taiwan has intensified in recent years with planes or ships sent toward the island on a near-daily basis, with the numbers rising in reaction to sensitive activities. The military activity has increased a notch since Pelosi's visit, with Chinese PLA fighter jets regularly flying over the middle boundary line. Experts say PLA navy vessels regularly navigate the waters off Taiwan's northeastern coast.

Meanwhile, to the south in the South China Sea, the U.S. 7th Fleet said its missile destroyer USS Milius sailed by Mischief Reef in a freedom of navigation operation. China has built an artificial island on the sea feature to stake its claim to the disputed territory.

China said the U.S. "illegally trespassed" into waters near the reef without the permission of the Chinese government, according to a statement from the Chinese military's southern command.

Outside of the military maneuvers, Kuo said he was worried about the announcements from Fujian's Maritime Safety Administration from last week, when it said it would conduct "on-site inspections" of cargo ships and working vessels in the Taiwan Strait as part of a patrol exercise.

"First they'll target ships traveling between the Strait, then they will target any international ship," he said. "Gradually this will become the de facto new status quo."

One of the U.S. representatives who attended the meeting with Tsai last week said Saturday the U.S. must take seriously the threat China poses to Taiwan. Republican Mike Gallagher, chairman of the U.S. House Select Committee on China, told [The Associated Press](#) that he plans to lead his committee in working to shore up the island government's defenses, encouraging Congress to expedite military aid to Taiwan.

# [Jordan king says Muslims have 'duty to deter Israeli escalation' in Jerusalem | The Times of Israel](#)

#bibleprophecy, #anti-semitism, #jordan, #abdullah

Apr 3, 2023

Jordan's King Abdullah II expressed on Sunday a commitment to "safeguard" Jerusalem's holy sites, in a meeting in Amman with Muslim and Christian religious leaders from the city.

A statement from the royal court said the king told the delegation, led by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, that Jordan "will always be with you."

"It is the duty of every Muslim to deter Israeli escalations against... holy sites in Jerusalem," the king said, according to the statement.

The king touted a longtime commitment to preserving "peace and harmony" at Jerusalem's flashpoint Temple Mount site, which houses the Al-Aqsa mosque compound or the Noble Sanctuary, Islam's third holiest site. The Temple Mount is revered by Jews as the historic location of the two Jewish Temples, making it Judaism's holiest site.

Jordan views itself as a custodian of the Temple Mount — a status Israel does not recognize, though it acknowledged the kingdom's "special role" at the site in the countries' peace treaty. Jordan in 1994 became the second Arab country to recognize and sign a peace treaty with neighboring Israel, after Egypt.

Many Palestinians reject the notion that the Temple Mount is holy to Jews, having accused Israel and Zionists for around a century of plotting to destroy the mosque and replace it with a Jewish temple — a move that is not supported by mainstream Israeli society.

Israel captured the Temple Mount and Jerusalem's Old City from Jordan in the 1967 Six Day War, almost two decades after Amman conquered it during the War of Independence in 1948. However, Israel allowed the Jordanian Waqf to continue to maintain religious authority atop the mount.

Under an arrangement that has prevailed for decades under Jordan's custodianship, Jews and other non-Muslims are permitted to visit the Temple Mount during certain hours but may not pray there. In recent years, Jewish religious nationalists, including members of the new governing coalition [like far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir](#), have increasingly visited the site and demanded equal prayer rights for Jews there, infuriating the Palestinians and Muslims around the world.

In January, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu paid a previously unannounced visit to Amman to meet with King Abdullah II, in a sit-down where he reportedly [promised](#) that this status quo on the Temple Mount would be preserved.

In his remarks on Sunday, Abdullah also hailed “Jerusalemites’... efforts to safeguard” the holy sites and “stressed the need to stop the displacement of Christians, as well as the repeated attacks on churches, religious figures and Christian property in Jerusalem,” according to the statement.

Christian places of worship in Jerusalem have seen a wave of attacks in recent months, some of them blamed on Jewish extremists.

Churches in Jerusalem [appealed to the government](#) on Friday to ensure Christians are able to worship freely during Easter and its run-up, expressing concern at mounting violence and acts of desecration over the past year.

Jerusalem’s Catholic Christian community [marked Palm Sunday](#) with masses attending religious processions in the Old City.

The Jordanian king’s remarks followed tensions with the Israeli government over a far-right minister’s remarks denying the existence of the Palestinian people and fears of a flare-up of violence during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, which began on March 23.

During Sunday’s meeting the Jordanian king “called on the international community to take a stand against the exclusionary and racist statements made recently by some Israeli officials,” the statement said.

Last month, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich of the far-right Religious Zionism party caused an international outcry after saying in a speech at a conference in Paris that the Palestinian people are an “invention” while standing behind a map of “Greater Israel” that includes modern-day Jordan.

Tensions with Jordan flared and the kingdom [summoned the Israeli envoy](#) in protest, with Amman panning the “reckless incitement and a violation of international norms.”

The Israeli Foreign Ministry sought to tamp down the backlash, tweeting that “Israel is committed to the 1994 peace agreement with Jordan” and that “there has been no change in the position of the State of Israel, which recognizes the territorial integrity of the Hashemite Kingdom,” in both Hebrew and English.

National Security Council chairman Tzachi Hanegbi later phoned Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi to offer a similar assurance regarding Israel’s commitment to its peace with Jordan.



# [Former Nickelodeon Show Creator Launches Cartoon to Teach Kids about the Bible - Milton Quintanilla \(christianheadlines.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #bible, #christianity, #children

Apr 3, 2023

The creator of the hit Nickelodeon show *The Fairly OddParents* has launched a new series that aims to teach children about God and the Bible.

Butch Hartman and his wife, Julieann, recently released six episodes of the 40-episode cartoon *The Garden*. The animated show is centered around the characters Lenny the lion and Lucy the lamb. The show also includes an app and a companion Bible that features illustrations of the characters from the series.

"Our point is to get Scripture as early into the hearts of children as we can," Butch told *The Christian Post* in a recent interview.

Lenny and Lucy live in a garden together where everything that's beautiful grows, and they talk to God, whom they refer to as "the boss," daily. God, who comes down as a rainbow, talks to the characters and gives them assignments and tasks. However, they can only complete the tasks well after they turn to Scripture. The show also hopes to help children memorize Scripture through song.

Butch told *The Christian Post* that he converted to Christianity in 2000 after working in Hollywood for nine years.

Butch experienced success with *The Fairly OddParents*, which was not a Christian show, but Butch shared that he attempted to inject Christian values of love and family into it.

He added that the idea for *The Garden* first came to him in 2005, but he didn't do anything with it until 2015, when the Lord impressed it upon his heart.

"We made seven episodes of "The Garden"... and then we sat on them for a while and didn't do anything with them. I left Nickelodeon in 2018," Butch explained. "And then, in 2021, we had the opportunity to pitch *The Garden* to a group of highly motivated investor people, and they really loved it, and we ended up being able to get some support to make 40 episodes."

When asked why it was necessary for children to have this type of content, the Hartmans explained that it was important for kids to know that God is with them no matter what.

"We want to make sure that families and kids know that God is always there. The Bible says He's the same yesterday, today and forever. He has not left the building," Butch asserted. "People think He has. The world wants you to think God has left the building. The world is trying to make sure that you think God is gone, but God has not gone."

On Saturday, The Hartmans released *The Garden Children's Bible* at the Museum of the Bible as part of a joint effort with Harper-Collins to create *The Garden Children's Bible*. Parents can also download "The Garden" app on their phones. There's also an app for "The Garden" that parents can download. Capital Records, an American music label, has also released "The Garden" soundtrack.

The first six episodes of *The Garden* are now available on Pure Flix, Yippee and Christian Cinema.