



# **SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

**News Articles for Episode 373**

# 28 Western nations say Gaza war 'must end now,' suffering has 'reached new depths' | The Times of Israel

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #gaza, #war, #western nations

Jul 21, 2025

**Israel rejects joint demand, US envoy slams it; FMs from UK, Canada, EU say Israel-backed aid scheme dangerous, 'deprives Gazans of human dignity'; condemn 'humanitarian city' plan**

Britain and 27 Western allies, including Australia, Canada, France, and Italy, said in a joint statement Monday that the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza “must end now,” arguing civilians’ suffering has “reached new depths.”

The [statement](#) — which also denounced Israel’s plan to create a “humanitarian city” in Gaza’s south, as well as settler activity in the West Bank, while calling for the release of the hostages — came at a time of continued reports of mass casualty events in the vicinity of aid distribution sites, and of rising malnutrition that UNRWA has said affects some [one-tenth](#) of Gaza’s children. It also came as hostage-truce negotiations with Hamas have [ground on](#), without any apparent breakthrough, despite expanded military operations.

Israel rejected the statement, saying it “sends the wrong message to Hamas.”

In the statement, the nations’ foreign ministers wrote that “the suffering of civilians in Gaza has reached new depths. The Israeli government’s aid delivery model is dangerous, fuels instability, and deprives Gazans of human dignity.”

Near-daily [mass-casualty events](#) have been reported in the vicinity of the US- and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation’s aid distribution sites, as Israeli troops have used live fire in attempts to control the crowds. The GHF has blamed Hamas for some of the violence, and similar scenes have been reported at sites that are run by other aid organizations.

“We condemn the drip feeding of aid and the inhumane killing of civilians, including children, seeking to meet their most basic needs of water and food,” said Monday’s statement, calling it “horrifying” that “over 800 Palestinians have been killed while seeking aid.”

Israel has acknowledged deaths near aid sites and has confirmed that troops have fired warning shots when crowds have gotten too close, but has said the death tolls, which mostly come from Hamas-run authorities, are exaggerated.

“The Israeli government’s denial of essential humanitarian assistance to the civilian population is unacceptable. Israel must comply with its obligations under international humanitarian law,” said the statement, calling on Israel to “immediately lift restrictions on the flow of aid and to urgently enable the UN and humanitarian NGOs to do their life-saving work safely and effectively.”

Israel has criticized the UN’s aid mechanisms as vulnerable to exploitation by Hamas, saying the terror group seizes aid and uses it to sustain itself and consolidate its control over parts of the Strip. The GHF said Monday that it has [repeatedly offered](#) to work together with the UN, but the UN has refused, saying that to do so would violate humanitarian principles.

The Monday communiqué was signed by the foreign ministers of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK, as well as the EU Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management.

It also called for the “immediate and unconditional release” of the “hostages cruelly held captive by Hamas since 7 October 2023 [who] continue to suffer terribly,” and asserted: “A negotiated ceasefire offers the best hope of bringing them home and ending the agony of their families.”

### **FMs: ‘Humanitarian city’ plan is ‘unacceptable’**

The statement also condemned Israel’s proposal to build a “humanitarian city” on the ruins of southern Gaza’s Rafah.

“Proposals to remove the Palestinian population into a ‘humanitarian city’ are completely unacceptable. Permanent forced displacement is a [violation](#) of international humanitarian law,” it said.

Defense Minister Israel Katz floated a plan earlier this month to [build a “city”](#) on the ruins of Rafah that would eventually contain all of the Strip’s residents; they would not be allowed to leave during ongoing fighting, as the IDF would operate against Hamas throughout the rest of the enclave.

The military reportedly [opposes the plan as](#) “unworkable,” and it has been panned by Israeli opposition figures as “crazy, even by this government’s standards.”

The diplomats also objected to “any steps towards territorial or demographic change in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,” singling out plans for the [controversial E1 area](#) in the West Bank as a “flagrant breach of international law,” and denouncing the [surge of attacks](#) on Palestinians by violent West Bank settlers, who have gone mostly unpunished.

“We urge the parties and the international community to unite in a common effort to bring this terrible conflict to an end, through an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire,” the statement said, affirming support for the US, Qatar, and Egypt, which have served as mediators in ongoing hostage-ceasefire negotiations.

“We are prepared to take further action to support an immediate ceasefire and a political pathway to security and peace for Israelis, Palestinians, and the entire region,” the foreign ministers concluded, without elaborating.

Israel rejected the statement, with the Foreign Ministry writing in a statement that it “is disconnected from reality and sends the wrong message to Hamas.” It also asserted that “all statements and all claims should be directed at the only party responsible for the lack of a deal for the release of hostages and a ceasefire: Hamas, which started this war and is prolonging it.”

The terror group has “stubbornly” refused the latest ceasefire proposal, which Israel agreed to, is “running a campaign to spread lies about Israel” and “deliberately acting to increase friction and harm to civilians who come to receive humanitarian aid,” the ministry added.

“The statement fails to focus the pressure on Hamas ... At these sensitive moments in the ongoing negotiations, it is better to avoid statements of this kind,” it said.

US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee also slammed the statement.

“Disgusting! 25 nations put pressure on Israel instead of savages of Hamas!” Huckabee said in post on X.

“Gaza suffers for 1 reason: Hamas rejects EVERY proposal. Blaming Israel is irrational,” he added.

While several European allies — including Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia did not sign the document — German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said Monday that he had spoken on the phone with Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar and expressed his “greatest concern about the catastrophic humanitarian situation, especially in light of the expansion of the Israeli offensive in Gaza.”

In addition to the joint letter, British Foreign Secretary David Lammy on Monday strongly criticized Israel over the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation while addressing Parliament, saying the “new Israeli aid system is inhumane, it’s dangerous, and it deprives Gazans of human dignity.”

“It’s a grotesque spectacle, wreaking a terrible human cost,” he said.

Lammy boasted that the current Labour government has sanctioned violent settlers and Israeli ministers, suspended trade negotiations with Israel, and signed an major agreement with the Palestinian Authority.

The remarks came after Lammy spoke by phone with Sa'ar, who said he told his British counterpart that " Hamas is solely responsible for the suffering of the population and the continuation of the war."

In his Westminster speech, Lammy detailed attacks by Israeli forces that have killed Gazan civilians seeking aid, and added that " Hamas is contributing to the chaos and taking advantage of it."

"The Israeli government must answer: What possible military justification can there be for strikes that have killed desperate, starving children?" Lammy continued. "What immediate actions are they taking to stop this litany of horrors? What will they do to hold those responsible to account?"

"I firmly believe the Israeli government's actions are doing untold damage to Israel's standing in the world and undermining Israel's long-term security," said Lammy, arguing that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should listen to "82 percent" of the Israeli public that wants a ceasefire.

"This offensive puts them in grave danger," he said. "But still Netanyahu persists."

He called Katz's plan to move Gaza's civilians to Rafah "a cruel vision which must never come to pass."

"The war in Gaza must end now," said the top British diplomat. "There is no military solution. Negotiations will secure the hostages. Further bloodshed serves no purpose. Hamas and Israel must both commit to a ceasefire now."

"And the next ceasefire must be the last ceasefire."

Hamas, he said, can have "no role in the governance of Gaza nor use it as a launchpad for terrorism."

The war in Gaza started on October 7, 2023, when some 5,000 Hamas-led terrorists invaded southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages, amid acts of brutality and sexual assault.

Some 20 living hostages remain in terror groups' captivity in Gaza, alongside the bodies of 28 who are confirmed dead, and two about whom there are grave concerns. One of the slain hostages is an Israeli soldier who was killed in 2014. The rest are civilians and soldiers abducted during the October 7 invasion.

The Hamas-run Gaza health ministry says more than 58,000 people in the Strip have been killed or are presumed dead in the fighting so far, though the toll cannot be verified and does not differentiate between civilians and fighters. Israel says it has killed some 20,000 combatants in battle as of January and another 1,600 terrorists inside Israel during the October 7 onslaught.

# ‘ Hamas causes the crisis, Israel gets the blame’ – Israel denies claims of Gaza famine amid int’l outcry | All Israel News

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #gaza, #famine, #food

Jul 28, 2025


## **IDF: There is no starvation, problems caused by lack of distribution inside Gaza**

Israeli officials are stridently rejecting new claims of famine in Gaza, amid an international outcry over the humanitarian crisis in the enclave that is being fueled by an intensified propaganda campaign by Hamas.

“As part of the negotiations, we see quite a few actions that Hamas is taking in order to resonate or create narratives in order to influence the negotiations,” a security official told *Walla News* on Tuesday.

“These actions are being widely reported in the international media. Quite a few things are coming out of Hamas's Health Ministry. They are very quickly repainted and presented as the absolute truth.”

*What you need to know about humanitarian aid for [#Gaza](#):*

 *Since May 19, and in accordance with the directive of the political echelon, aid enters Gaza through two primary channels:*

*1. Distribution sites operated by [@GHFUpdates](#), where weekly food packages are provided to... [pic.twitter.com/eLIQ1ELY6M](https://pic.twitter.com/eLIQ1ELY6M)*


*— COGAT (@cogatonline) [July 22, 2025](#)*

In a joint statement on Tuesday, 25 countries attacked Israel and said they “condemn the drip feeding of aid and the **[inhumane killing of civilians](#)**, including children, seeking to meet their most basic needs of water and food.”

Throughout the war, many international media outlets, including major institutions like the New York Times and BBC, have echoed claims attributed to Gazan “health authorities,” often without clearly stating that they are part of Hamas’ governmental department.

Also on Tuesday, Hamas went public with some of its most radical claims so far, saying that 15 people, including four children, had died “due to famine and malnutrition” over the past day.

A senior Israeli security official responded to these claims on Tuesday, telling the *Times of Israel* that after a “deep assessment” of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, including intelligence gathered from Palestinians, the military has “not identified starvation at this current point in time, but we understand that action is required to stabilize the humanitarian situation.”

 *WATCH: 950 trucks worth of aid, currently waiting in Gaza ! for international organizations to pick up and distribute to Gazan civilians. This is after Israel facilitated the aid entry into Gaza. [pic.twitter.com/aQTR7Sryhs](https://pic.twitter.com/aQTR7Sryhs)*

— LTC Nadav Shoshani (@LTC\_Shoshani) [July 22, 2025](#)

“Hamas causes the crisis, and we get the blame,” Israel's ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, said in an interview with *The Jerusalem Post*.

“We're not ignoring the suffering in Gaza – but the blame lies with Hamas, not Israel,” said Danon, strongly rejecting claims of famine in Gaza.

“Look at the quantities of food entering through Kerem Shalom, through humanitarian convoys, through aid centers – there is a constant flow of food,” he noted. “But Hamas hijacks aid, disrupts distribution, and prevents civilians from accessing relief – and then blames Israel.”

According to COGAT, the IDF unit coordinating humanitarian activities in Gaza, the main obstacle for aid reaching the people of Gaza is the lack of distribution of some 950 truckloads that have been processed and are waiting to be picked up inside the strip.

“Recently, close to 4,500 trucks entered Gaza, including flour for bakeries and 2,500 tons of baby food and high-calorie special food for children. Over the past month, there has been a significant decline in the collection of humanitarian aid from the crossings by international aid organizations,” COGAT said.

In the past month, an average of 71 trucks entered Gaza every day. “As of now, the contents of approximately 950 humanitarian aid trucks are awaiting collection on the Gazan side of the Kerem Shalom and Zikim crossings.”

COGAT further explained that since aid was resumed on May 19, after a break of around two weeks, the two primary channels for aid reaching Gaza have been sites operated by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), and aid coordinated with the UN, international organizations and countries.

*Over 700 trucks worth of aid are currently within Gaza waiting to be distributed by international organizations. Israel facilitated in recent weeks ~4.5k trucks.*

*The international community that isn't distributing it: <https://t.co/IztFwKinr1> [pic.twitter.com/cSxophgl1Y](https://t.co/cSxophgl1Y)*

— LTC Nadav Shoshani (@LTC\_Shoshani) [July 20, 2025](#)

Speaking with the *Times of Israel*, the Israeli official said that the aid waiting to be picked up by the international organizations is enough to supply the enclave with two weeks' worth of food.

According to him, COGAT and UN officials recently discussed how the aid could be more effectively distributed, as most of its trucks have been looted by Gazan mobs on the way to the warehouses.

The US- and Israeli-backed GHF has pleaded with other organizations to cooperate with it. In a recent statement, it said that the UN, “has a capacity and operational problem” and called for “more collaboration” to deliver life-saving aid.

The aid groups have accused the GHF of indirectly causing Palestinian deaths, and argued that the Israeli military keeps rejecting requests to improve its distribution, such as Hamas police escorts or the entry of communication devices.

*UN Secretary-General [@antoniouterres](#) continues to expose his moral bankruptcy.*

*While members of the Druze community are being brutally slaughtered in Syria, he once again chooses silence.*

*Instead of calling for swift action in Syria, he chooses to vilify Israel—the only... [pic.twitter.com/qDpufgN3P7](https://t.co/qDpufgN3P7)*

— Danny Danon דני דאנון (@dannydanon) [July 16, 2025](#)

In the past, Hamas' security forces safely escorted aid trucks to the UN's warehouses, where they were then looted and the aid distributed to Hamas fighters or sold back to the Gazan population, necessitating the creation of a new mechanism through the GHF.

The official reiterated that recent famine claims were part of Hamas' “cynical and timed move aimed at creating international pressure on Israel.”

Ambassador to the UN Danon argued that the recent international drive to condemn Israel was not purely out of humanitarian concerns. “People see the images, they hear the outcry – but they don't check the facts,” Danon said.

“That's why we're fighting not only on the battlefield, but in the arena of perception.”

Asked about UN Secretary-General António Guterres's recent accusations that Israel is blocking access to aid, Danon hit back: “It's hypocrisy. From day one, the UN tried to

undermine the Israeli National Relief Fund that was set up to provide direct aid to Gaza. They don't want Israel to succeed – they want control. Even if that means fewer Palestinians get fed.”

# [China Backs Iran Against U.S. and Israel | Breitbart.com](#)

#bibleprophecy, #china, #iran, #israel

Jul 17, 2025

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi declared his country's support for the "national sovereignty and dignity" of Iran after meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Wednesday.

The foreign ministers from the two authoritarian regimes met on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in the northern Chinese city of Tianjin. The SCO is [technically](#) a regional security block for Central and Southeast Asia, but it has increasingly served as the front lobby for the Chinese-Russian axis of influence.

Wang [promised](#) Araghchi that China would "continue to support Iran in safeguarding its national sovereignty and dignity, resisting power politics and bullying, defending its legitimate rights and interests through political negotiation, and adhering to the principle of good-neighborliness and friendship to continuously improve and develop relations with its neighboring countries."

Iran, the world's worst state sponsor of terrorism and a constant destabilizing force in the Middle East, is no one's idea of a "good neighbor." Wang poured on the flattery because China sees an opportunity to build ties with the Islamic Republic after its military was humiliated by Israel and the United States in the 12-Day War.

Araghchi offered "high-level exchanges" and deeper "mutually beneficial cooperation" in return. What China really wants is oil – and Beijing is worried that recent developments in the Middle East are jeopardizing a carefully-planned bid for influence that seemed to be going very well for China during the Biden administration.

Just two years ago, China was [crowing](#) that it brokered a rapprochement between regional adversaries Iran and Saudi Arabia, supposedly a diplomatic achievement that heralded China's emergence on the world stage as a diplomatic titan. Today, China watches helplessly as Iran's proxy forces lie in ruins and the U.S. is steadily bringing the new Syrian government closer to its orbit, with a few [setbacks](#) along the way. The game is far from over, but it does not look as good for Beijing as it did under the previous U.S. administration.

As the European powers who stuck with the Iran nuclear deal after America's exit grew [frustrated](#) by Iran's cheating, and U.S.-Iran nuclear negotiations [went](#) into a deep freeze, China saw a chance to become the Islamic Republic's best friend.

It was a shrewd and mostly cost-free move for China, which looks for any opportunity to denounce “bullying” from the U.S. or Europe, even when the ostensible victims of the bullying are trying to cook up weapons-grade uranium. China does not have to do much except run cover for Iran at the United Nations Security Council. Araghchi reminded Wang on Wednesday that Iran expects China to keep doing that.

According to Iran’s state-run PressTV, Araghchi “briefed his Chinese counterpart on the latest developments following these aggressions and the cessation of hostilities, emphasizing the responsibility of the U.N. Security Council and all governments to uphold peace and security in the region and the world.”

“China highly values Iran’s commitment not to developing nuclear weapons, respects Iran’s right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and appreciates Iran’s pursuit of peace through diplomatic means,” Wang [responded](#).

China might also be looking to bolster its relationship with Iran as a few cracks begin appearing in the “unlimited partnership” between China and Russia. Oleg Ignatov, senior Russia analyst for the Crisis Group, [told](#) Al Jazeera News on Wednesday that “North Korea is now a more important ally for Russia than Iran or China.”

Ignatov said Pyongyang developed a closer relationship with Moscow by sending troops to fight in Ukraine and it could be on the verge of sending thousands more.

“North Korea supplies Russia with ammunition and some types of heavy weapons. As for the North Korean soldiers, Russian sources say they are professional and disciplined. At the beginning of the Kursk operation, they lacked the modern combat skills required for this type of war, which involves the use of large numbers of drones, but they quickly adapted,” he said.

Rachel Minyoung Lee, a senior fellow with North Korean watchdog group 38 North, said North Korea gained valuable combat experience for its soldiers in Ukraine, plus benefits like military technology, oil, coal, fertilizer, and wheat from Russia.

Lee said this relationship gives North Korea “stronger leverage vis-a-vis China, which could have broader regional implications in the longer term.”

China will not be thrilled by the prospect of a stronger, more assertive North Korea, so it might want to show off its own dangerous protege in Iran. Meanwhile, Russia, China, and Iran sense a joint opportunity to [recruit](#) another tiny terror into their axis of authoritarianism: Georgia, which is increasingly disinterested in robust multi-party democracy.

# **Damascus asks Turkey for defense support after sectarian clashes and Israeli strikes | The Times of Israel**

#bibleprophecy, ##turkey, #syria, #damascus, #support

Jul 23, 2025

## **The situation in Syria has increased Israeli-Turkish tensions, and Ankara has harshly criticized Israel's airstrikes in the country last week**

Syria's interim government has requested Turkey's support to strengthen its defense capabilities, Turkish officials said Wednesday, following sectarian violence over the past two weeks that drew in Israeli strikes.

The defense ministry officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity according to procedures, said that Syria has also sought assistance to combat "terrorist organizations," including the Islamic State group.

Turkey was working toward providing training, advisory services and technical support to help strengthen Syria's defense capacity, the officials added. Syrian officials could not be immediately reached for comment.

Turkey was believed to provide assistance to Syrian rebels fighting Bashar al-Assad, the country's ousted leader. Now, it is a prominent supporter of the government that replaced Assad last year, headed by Ahmad al-Sharaa. It has been seeking a defense agreement with Damascus that could reportedly include establishing Turkish military bases on Syrian territory.

Wednesday's news, which came days after violent clashes between Bedouin Arab tribes and Druze militias in the southern province of Sweida, means that Ankara will likely be stepping up its presence and activity in Syria.

The Bedouin-Druze conflict triggered Israeli airstrikes on convoys of government forces in Sweida and on the defense ministry headquarters in central Damascus, which Israel justified as efforts to protect Syrian Druze, in solidarity with the Israeli Druze minority.

The US envoy to Syria, Tom Barrack, announced an American-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Syria on July 19, which allowed Syrian government forces to go into Sweida.

An earlier ceasefire between Druze factions and government forces broke down. After a second ceasefire, the government forces withdrew from Sweida, but fighting flared again between Druze and Bedouin groups.

In an interview with The Associated Press earlier this week, Barrack said the US has “no position” on the prospect of a defense pact between Syria and Turkey.

“It’s not in the US’ business or interest to tell any of the surrounding nations with each other what to do,” he said.

The situation in Syria has increased tensions between Turkey and Israel, which is occupying the former no-man’s land adjacent to its border as a buffer zone. In April, Israel struck five cities in Syria, including more than a dozen strikes near a strategic air base in the city of Hama, where Turkey reportedly has interests in having a military presence. Israel accused Turkey of trying to build a “protectorate” in Syria.

That month, Turkey and Israel [held talks](#) on creating a deconfliction mechanism in Syria that would avoid clashes between the two countries. They reportedly [reached an agreement](#) following a month of talks.

Turkey has vocally criticized the recent Israeli strikes, with Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan [claiming](#) Tuesday that Israel wants a divided Syria. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, long a harsh critic of Israel, accused it last week of using the Druze minority in Syria as a pretext for expanding into the war-torn country.

“Israel, using the Druze as an excuse, has been expanding its banditry into neighboring Syria over the past two days,” Erdogan said in a televised speech, calling Israel a “terror state.”

Ankara also backs an agreement reached between Sharaa’s administration and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, or SDF, to integrate into Syria’s national army. Implementation of the deal has stalled, with a major sticking point being whether the SDF would remain as a cohesive unit in the new army or be dissolved completely.

On Tuesday, Fidan warned Kurdish and other groups in Syria against exploiting the tensions to pursue autonomy, stating that any attempt to divide Syria would be viewed as a direct threat to Turkey’s national security and could prompt intervention.

Turkey considers the SDF a terrorist organization because of its association with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, which has waged a long-running insurgency in Turkey.

The Turkish officials said Turkey expects the SDF to follow through on its commitments under the agreement, adding that Turkey would be “following” the situation.

# **Russia and Iran launch naval drill in the Caspian Sea | The Jerusalem Post**

#bibleprophecy, #russia, #iran, #navy

Jul 17, 2025

**Russia sought to do this naval drill primarily to show it is still interested in joint cooperation with Iran.**

[Iran and Russia](#) began the CASAREX 2025 naval drill on Monday, held in the Caspian Sea, which is seen as a way for both countries to assert their role in those waters, which lie north of Iran and south of Russia.

Although this has some significance, given that it is a joint drill, the fact that it's taking place in the Caspian Sea illustrates certain features of the Iran-Russia relationship.

## **How Iran-Russia ties changed following Israel war**

Moscow and [Beijing](#) did not come to Iran's aid during the 12-day war with Israel. Neither sought to prevent the attacks on Iran nor appeared to care very much that their partner was being attacked. Even when the US intervened and bombed Iran, the two countries did not step up.

This is intriguing because as part of Russia and China's drive for a new world order, one would assume they want Iran to be stronger. What they have shown is pragmatism, letting their Iranian partner be thrown under the bus and humiliated.

Russia is busy fighting in Ukraine. It has already suffered a loss of prestige in the Middle East with the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime. The weakening of Iran is another loss for Russia. As such, Moscow sought to conduct this naval drill primarily to demonstrate its continued interest in joint cooperation.

The Caspian Sea has some strategic importance. Not only is it situated between Iran and Russia, but also Azerbaijan and the countries of Central Asia.

## **Iran wants new economic corridor in Central Asia**

The Islamic Republic has been doing outreach to Central Asia. Additionally, Iran aims to establish a new north-south economic corridor that would connect these areas with southern Iran and Pakistan. Toward that end, naval security is essential in the [Caspian Sea](#).

Iran's Tasnim state media said the initial part of the drill was taking place in the "fourth maritime zone of Nadaja near Rasht."

A vessel named SB738 – a 57-meter frigate-class ship – from the Russian side is taking part in the drill.

“This exercise is being held by the [Islamic Republic of Iran Navy](#) and with the participation of representatives from the naval forces of the Caspian littoral countries. It is designed to enhance field coordination, operational interactions, and multilateral cooperation in the field of maritime search and rescue,” Tasnim noted.

The news agency added that “the main phase of this exercise will be carried out in the fourth naval zone of Imam Reza (AS) Nadaja after holding joint coordination meetings between the Iranian and Russian naval forces, as well as with the presence of observers from other countries bordering the Caspian Sea.”

# Anti-Jewish hate crimes 'surge' 58%, now more than 37% of all Chicago hate crimes, per city stats - JNS.org

#bibleprophecy, #anti-semitism, #chicago, #jewish, #hate crimes

Jul 20, 2025

**Brandon Johnson, the Chicago mayor, decried the rise in antisemitic crimes and anti-gay crimes, which were up 25%.**

Earlier this month, Massachusetts [reported](#) a “troubling” 20.5% increase in antisemitic hate crimes in 2024 in the state amid an overall decline in hate crimes.

Chicago [stated](#) on Friday hate crimes in the city “fell by 25% in 2024, with substantial declines across nearly every category.” One of the categories that didn’t see a decline is anti-Jewish hate crimes, which Chicago said was “of particular alarm” and which “surged” by 58% and accounts for 37.6% of all reported hate crimes in the city.

“This is part of a national increase in anti-Jewish hate crimes but is especially troubling given that Jewish residents represent just 3% of Chicago’s population,” according to the office of Brandon Johnson, the city mayor.

The mayor’s office also said that hate crimes against gay men were up, but the press release didn’t say how much.

The Chicago Commission on Human Relations 2024 report on hate crimes and incidents, which was filed to the mayor on Friday, states that there were 79 anti-Jewish hate crimes in Chicago in 2024, up from 50 the prior year. Of the 79, 8% were assaults, 5% battery and 47% were criminal damage.

In 2024, Jews were the main target of hate crimes in Chicago (79), followed by black people (33 incidents, down from 76 the prior year) and gay people (45, up from 36). There were six anti-Muslim hate crimes, down from 16 the prior year, and five anti-Arab incidents, the same number as the prior year.

The commission listed hate crimes against gay men (21% of all hate crimes) before anti-Jewish ones (37.6%) both within the body of the report and in its section on “findings and recommendations.” It estimated that between 3% and 4% of Chicagoans are gay men and that about 3% of Chicagoans are Jewish.

The Chicago mayor, who broke a Chicago City Council tie and [voted](#) for a resolution demanding a ceasefire in Gaza in January 2024, has drawn widespread criticism for anti-Israel statements and actions. The Chicago Jewish Alliance said in April that it was “[outrageous](#)” that Johnson was photographed wearing a keffiyeh.

The Consulate General of Israel to the Midwest [stated](#) in August 2024 that it was “beyond disappointed” by Johnson’s “ongoing support” for anti-Israel protests.

In October, the Consulate General [said](#) that it was “appalling” and “incomprehensible” that the city education board president, whom Johnson appointed, had posted antisemitic content and supported Hamas.

Morton Klein, national president of the Zionist Organization of America, told JNS that Johnson “only legitimizes, mainstreams and promotes antisemitism and Israel-bashing” by having “insensitively” worn a keffiyeh, which “symbolizes hatred of the Jewish state,” alongside a Council on American-Islamic Relations official.

The Chicago mayor’s decision to highlight anti-gay attacks “before the more prevalent and serious antisemitic attacks makes it clear that this mayor is not only not protecting Jews but is motivating hostility and anger and verbal and physical violence against Jews.”

“He is clearly a frightening, heartless menace to the Jewish people,” Klein told JNS.

The Jewish Community Relations Council, an umbrella group for Chicago Jewish organizations, [stated](#) that it will hold two public hearings to address the “unnerving trend” in anti-Jewish hate crimes.

# Christianity faces being ‘wiped out,’ UK’s FoRB envoy warns | Christian Post.com

#bibleprophecy, #christianity, #religion, #faith, #elimination

Jul 21, 2025

Christianity is at risk of being “wiped out” in parts of the world due to intensifying persecution, the United Kingdom’s special envoy for freedom of religion or belief, David Smith, has warned. The British government is now targeting 10 countries as part of its revised foreign policy focus to defend this human right.

Smith, the Labour Party MP for North Northumberland, made the remarks during a briefing at the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office. A Christian who previously worked with Tearfund and the Bible Society, he announced a new plan to prioritize FoRB in countries where religious minorities, including Christians, Bahá’ís and Ahmadiyya Muslims, face repression or violence, the Religion Media Centre [reported](#).

Smith said the U.K. will focus on 10 countries, naming Vietnam, Algeria, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, China, Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan and Iraq. He said these were selected because of the severity of need, the U.K.’s diplomatic ties and the possibility of making progress.

He added that persecution, carried out both by governments and social groups, can involve harassment by police, social ostracism, detention without cause, denial of citizenship, torture, attacks on places of worship and even killings, citing research by the Pew Research Center.

He cited recent data showing that 380 million Christians face persecution worldwide and warned, “Persecution on the basis of religion or belief, enacted by States themselves and social groups, is taking place on every continent in the world.”

Smith called the U.K.’s commitment “a new chapter” in foreign policy and said freedom of religion was interlinked with other liberties, including freedom of speech, conscience and assembly.

Of the 10 selected, only three — Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan — are among the top 10 in the Open Doors World Watch List, which identifies countries where Christians are most severely persecuted. The worst offenders on that list, such as North Korea, Somalia and Yemen, are not among the U.K.’s current priorities.

Smith acknowledged the gap and said that countries like Eritrea and Yemen remain within his scope through ongoing advocacy. He stated that the strategy’s targeted

nature does not prevent the U.K. from acting in other cases, including on behalf of prisoners of conscience.

He referred to the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan, who are not recognized as Muslims by the state and whose mosques are often desecrated, and the repression of Bahá'ís in Iran and Christians in North Korea.

FoRB, Smith explained, is not merely about religious belief but about the health of societies. “Religious intolerance and persecution can fuel instability and conflict,” he said. He added that protecting belief rights is crucial to preventing future crises, especially in countries grappling with war or sectarian divisions.

The U.K. government’s FoRB strategy involves five strands.

First, it aims to uphold international standards through bodies such as the U.N. and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Second, it will embed the issue into targeted bilateral diplomacy, encouraging individual missions to raise FoRB in foreign capitals. Third, the U.K. will strengthen international coalitions working on religious freedom. Fourth, the Foreign Office will incorporate FoRB into its mainstream human rights programming. The fifth strand involves collaboration with civil society groups working on interfaith respect and awareness.

Speaking at the briefing, Lord Collins of Highbury, minister for human rights, said the U.K. has long believed that rights and the rule of law strengthen global prosperity and resilience. He said his office had already written to British heads of mission directing them to embed human rights, including FoRB, into all areas of diplomatic work.

He cited the recent release of two individuals — Nigerian atheist Mubarak Bala and Cuban Pastor Lorenzo Rosales Fajardo — as examples of successful British-supported advocacy.

“Only by working together can we build a world where everyone, everywhere, can live with dignity, free to believe — or not believe — without fear,” Lord Collins said.

In April, during a [debate](#), Smith said Britain’s diplomatic stance is informed by its own history, moving “from persecution to pluralism,” which he said provides credibility to advocate abroad. He described the U.K. as “uniquely well placed” to act in support of religious liberty, citing its legacy of legal rights and peaceful pluralism.

The role of FoRB envoy was created following a 2019 report by then-Bishop of Truro Philip Mounstephen, which found that Foreign Office staff lacked awareness of global religious persecution. The report led to recommendations that religious freedom be formally integrated into U.K. foreign policy.

Smith argued that defending FoRB not only benefits persecuted communities but also those who engage in repression. He said FoRB could unlock new opportunities and

freedoms for their nations to flourish, and reaffirmed his commitment to press the U.K. government to act.

Meanwhile, Christian Today [noted](#) that [new research](#) by Jersey Road PR has found that mainstream U.K. media rarely report on attacks against Christians globally.

# World to end with 'Big Crunch' as scientists declare 'humans will burn in cosmic hell' - Daily Star

#bibleprophecy, #life, #world, #big crunch, #disaster

Jul 21, 2025

## **Boffins have put out a start date on when the universe will come to an end and collapse in on itself in a process opposite to the Big Bang, called the 'Big Crunch'**

Boffins believe the universe will come to an end in a process opposite to that of the Big Bang – they have called the Big Crunch(Image: NASA, ESA/Hubble, HST Frontier Fields)

Boffins believe the universe will come to an end in [a terrifying cosmic collapse](#) as it folds in on itself and becomes a “furnace of this cosmic hell”.

According to the “Big Crunch” theory, experts believe the universe will come to a close in one big final cataclysmic implosion, in a process which is the opposite of the “Big Bang”. They say that space itself will contract into a scorching hot dense area as the pressure of the universe increases and temperatures [skyrocket to astronomical levels](#).

Although [the universe coming](#) to an end as a result of the Big Crunch is only a theory, scientists looking at new measurements of “Dark Energy” have warned that the cataclysmic crunch is the most likely outcome for our universe.

Boffins believe space itself will fold in on itself leaving the final frontier to become a furious hell-like furnace(Image: Getty Images)

Eggheads at Cornell University have unveiled when they believe the process will begin and what exactly will happen in this astronomical apocalypse.

Within a few million years of the crunch, the universe would be as hot as the surface of the sun as it folds into a furious cosmic inferno. Academics said that as the universe’s temperature continues to rise it would eventually peak at “Planck temperature” – the highest possible temperature according to scientific models.

Professor Avi Loeb, a theoretical physicist at Cornell University, has described what the universe would look like during the final days. Despite the hellish temperatures, he said that we will all be dead long before the universe ever reaches this point.

He said: “Needless to say, all humans will burn up in the furnace of this cosmic hell.”

Professor Henry Tye, a leading cosmologist from Cornell University, also gave a predicted date for when the process will start. He said: 'We calculate that this will lead to a Big Crunch about 19.5 billion years from now.

“Knowing that the age of the universe is 13.8 billion years, one obtains that the lifespan is 33.3 billion years.”

Despite the Big Crunch being an apocalyptic event which would turn the universe into a sizzling inferno, Prof Tye warned that the Earth will face another doomsday scenario billions of years beforehand.

He said: “Before the big crunch, at about five billion years from now, the sun will use up its fuel and start growing dramatically.

"Its outer layers will expand until they engulf much of the solar system, as it becomes what astronomers call a red giant. Eventually, it fades to a tiny white dwarf.

“To survive, human beings have to move to the edge of our solar system or beyond. We have a few billion years' time to prepare for that trip.”

# [Yankees Star Aaron Judge Says Only Jesus Truly Satisfies - | Crosswalk.com](#)

#bibleprophecy, #baseball, #aaron judge, #faith, #jesus

Jul 18, 2026

One of Major League Baseball's top players says worldly achievements fall short compared to a life with [Jesus](#). Aaron Judge of the New York Yankees [leads](#) the league in batting average (.355), on-base percentage (.462), and hits (125) -- yet he says none of it compares to the peace and purpose he's found in Christ.

The 10th-year outfielder made the comments prior to this year's All-Star Game when asked by CBN Sports what he would tell someone who thinks that fame and fortune are the answer to all their problems.

*"Our Lord and Savior, [Jesus](#) Christ -- He's given me this platform, given me this ability," Judge responded. "The fame, getting the chance to do this is great and all, but it's not fulfilling as much as the relationship I have with Him. So that's what I would tell anybody: Build a relationship with Him, and that'll solve all your problems."*

Judge is a future Hall of Famer with a career already marked by historic milestones. He's a seven-time All-Star and two-time MVP who holds the American League single-season home run record (62). This year, he became the fastest player in MLB history to reach 350 home runs, surpassing Mark McGwire's previous mark.

He's also one of the league's most outspoken Christians. His bat at this year's All-Star Game included not only the name of his newborn daughter, Nora, but also a Bible verse, [2 Corinthians 5:7](#). ("For we live by faith, not by sight.")

[.@TheJudge44](#)'s 1st ASG as a Dad ❤️ [pic.twitter.com/Gq9rUXDsCE](https://pic.twitter.com/Gq9rUXDsCE)

— New York Yankees (@Yankees) [July 14, 2025](#)

His X bio reads: "Christian. Faith, Family, then Baseball."

After he passed Roger Maris' American League record of 61 home runs in 2022, Judge referenced his faith during an interview on national television.

*"I gotta thank God for putting me in this position and getting me to where I'm at, [and] the constant support from my family and friends who have been with me through it all -- coaches from Little League, high school, college that have been here [and] instructed me and helped me out through this whole thing," Judge said then.*

His Yankees are currently in second place in the AL East, trailing Toronto by two games.