



# **SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

**News Articles for Episode 304**

# [Amid Rafah criticism, Israel looking for non-American weaponry - The Jerusalem Post \(jpost.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #weaponary, #supplies

Mar 25, 2024

An Israeli official claimed that Israel's main "anchor is the US, but tensions are currently high regarding entry into Rafah, which will likely affect security assistance."

Israel is currently trying to find a bypass to obtain weapons and raw materials from non-American outlets to overcome the material gaps of critical combat equipment, KAN News reported on Monday morning.

KAN cites a security official as claiming that the "increasing criticism and delegitimization fueled by both Muslim groups and antisemites endanger the transfer of US-backed ammunition and warfare.

There is concern that the tensions with the US are stimulated by the entry of Israeli troops into [Rafah](#) alongside the humanitarian issue in Gaza. [These factors] will affect Americans' willingness to continue assisting Israel with the same intensity."

## Top Articles

There are currently multiple countries that do not provide warfare to Israel and do a "quiet boycott," which states that [these countries] are bound by state laws to sell weapons to countries in conflict.

For example, Canada stated that they would stop providing Israel with warfare last week, which includes electronic cards and subcomponents used for the Iron Dome and Italy, nor selling Israeli armaments for navy ships.

Allegedly, France and Germany are threatening to boycott the equipment supply amid a global ammunition shortage in which countries are focused on their nationalistic needs.

"There are no stocks in Europe; everyone is making sure to purchase the most advanced means [for themselves]," the security official claimed.

According to the official, Israel's anchor of weapon shipment is the United States. He claimed that there is still US-backed help, "every day there is an air train arrives. [However] the largest fear [currently] is that the tensions due to the entry into Rafah will affect the American willingness to help Israel security-wise."

## Defense Minister to meet with head of CIA, Defense Secretary

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant will begin a series of meetings on Monday with senior White House officials, including the Secretary of Defense and the head of the CIA, regarding the stability of ammunition supplies into Israel as well as American support of Israel's military operation in the [Gaza Strip](#)."

Another security official claimed that there is "no choice - [Israel] must enter Rafah unless a ceasefire agreement is reached. If there is no agreement, the position of the security establishment is that the Gazan citizens should be evacuated from [Rafah](#) along the coast.

# **Dermer: Israel will enter Rafah 'even if entire world turns on us, including the US' | The Times of Israel**

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #rafah, #isolation

Mar 21, 2024

As Netanyahu aides head to Washington to discuss potential tactics in southern Gaza city, minister stresses 'we're going to fight until the battle's won'

REUTERS — Israel will take control of Rafah even if it causes a rift with the United States, a senior Israeli official said on Thursday, describing the Gazan city packed with evacuees as a final Hamas bastion harboring a quarter of the terror group's fighters.

The prospect of tanks and troops storming Rafah worries Washington, which says Israeli must have a plan to move more than a million Palestinians who have sheltered there since being displaced from elsewhere in the Gaza Strip during the five-month-old war.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has pledged to ensure civilian evacuation and humanitarian aid — measures that top Israeli aides are due to discuss in the White House in the coming days at the behest of US President Joe Biden.

"We're quite confident that we can do this in a way that would be effective — not only militarily, but also on the humanitarian side. And they have less confidence that we can do it," one of those Israeli envoys, Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, told the podcast "Call Me Back with Dan Senor."

Dermer, a former ambassador to the United States, said Israel would hear out American ideas for Rafah, but that the city on Gaza's border with Egypt would be taken whether or not the allies reach agreement:

"It will happen even if Israel is forced to fight alone. Even if the entire world turns on Israel, including the United States, we're going to fight until the battle's won."

As fighting raged in northern Gaza, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Cairo for talks with Arab officials about a proposed temporary ceasefire. Israel is open to a truce that will allow the release of hostages, but has ruled out ending the war with Hamas still in power.

Dermer said leaving the Iran-backed Islamists standing would invite open-ended attacks against Israel from across the region: "And that's why the determination to take them out is so strong, even if it leads to a potential breach with the United States."

He and National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi are expected to fly to [Washington](#) in the coming days to discuss the continuation of the war on Hamas with Biden administration officials.

While backing Israel's war goals, the US administration has been shaken by the toll on Palestinian civilians and particularly the growing humanitarian crisis in the enclave.

The offensive has killed almost 32,000 Palestinians, the Hamas-run Gaza health ministry said, without providing a breakdown of civilians and combatants. Israel says at least 13,000 are fighters. Hamas killed around 1,200 people in Israel on October 7 and abducted 253.

Hamas does not detail its losses or deployments and has dismissed Israel's assessments as exaggerations. Palestinian rocket salvos have tapered off dramatically as most of Gaza has been overrun by Israeli forces. So have Israeli military losses, which number 252 since the start of the ground operation in late October.

Dermer said there were four intact Hamas battalions in Rafah, bolstered by gunmen who had retreated from other parts of Gaza, amounting to 25% of the group's prewar strength.

"We're not going to leave a quarter of them in place," he said. "We're going into Rafah because we have to... And I think what people don't understand is that October 7 is an existential moment for Israel."

# [Betrayal or artificial outrage? US abstention on UNSC vote sparks debates in Israel and world | All Israel News](#)

#bibleprophecy, #united nations, #united states, #israel, #resolution

Mar 26, 2024

## US claims decision signals no policy change as Hamas praises abstention

The U.S. **decision to abstain** from voting on a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution, which demanded an immediate ceasefire in Gaza without making it contingent upon the release of Israeli hostages, sparked controversial debates over its interpretation on Tuesday.

After blocking similar resolutions in the past, the U.S. on Monday abstained for the first time, allowing a UNSC resolution to pass against Israeli appeals amid an already deepening rift with the Israeli government.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the American decision a withdrawal from its previous positions and responded by canceling talks about alternatives to a Rafah incursion with U.S. officials in Washington this week.

U.S. officials expressed surprise at Netanyahu's reaction and rejected the idea that the abstention reflected a policy change, with State Department Spokesman Matthew Miller saying the U.S. chose not to veto "because there were also things in that resolution that were consistent with our long-term position."

An unnamed U.S. official told the Axios news outlet that the White House was "puzzled" by Netanyahu's position, accusing him of seeking political gain. "The prime minister could have chosen a different course – to align with the U.S. on the meaning of this resolution. He chose not to, apparently for political purposes."

Another American official told Axios he believes Netanyahu is using the issue as an excuse not to send a delegation to Washington.

"He was afraid we might offer something reasonable," the official said. "He would rather have a fight with us, even if it's not in Israel's interest."

Richard Goldberg, senior advisor at the Foundation for Freedom of Democracies (FDD) disagreed with the U.S. decision and warned of its implications.

“The spin on this resolution doesn’t reflect what the resolution actually says. This resolution pretends October 7 never happened and Hamas isn’t a brutal terrorist organization,” said Goldberg.

“The United States has fundamentally shifted its policy from ‘no ceasefire without the release of hostages’ to ‘we’d like to see both, but they need not be connected.’ Hamas is never going to release hostages unless it faces major pressure,” he added.

Several Republican senators, including Marco Rubio and Tim Scott, also criticized the U.S. abstention. Rubio said the decision was taken to “appease far-left anti-semitic, Pro-Hamas activists.”

International reactions largely followed expected patterns, with most European and Middle Eastern nations, such as Turkey, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates, praising the resolution.

After Hamas immediately praised the UNSC resolution on Monday, Palestinian Authority (PA) officials joined by voicing their support while using the opportunity to excoriate Israel.

The caretaker prime minister of the PA, Mohammad Shtayyeh, said he hoped, “Israel will be forced to implement the decision, as Israel’s criminal behavior as a rogue state above the law, and as a criminal state, makes whoever stands with it an accomplice in the crime.”

In Israel, several members of Netanyahu’s coalition supported the prime minister’s strong response, with Foreign Minister Israel Katz vowing that Israel would not stop fighting but, instead, would “destroy Hamas and continue to fight until the last of the hostages returns home.”

“Today we are paying a price for the bear hug we received from the US after October 7th,” Likud party Knesset Member Danny Danon said on Radio Kol BaRama. “We need to carry out the operation in Rafah even without the approval of the Americans.”

In Israeli media, observers speculated about Netanyahu’s motives for escalating the already serious rift with the U.S. Biden administration.

An unnamed senior political official told local Channel 12 news: “The confrontation with the US does not weaken Israel, but signals strength. The world and especially our enemies see that Israel knows how to withstand any pressure.”

However, one Israeli political bureaucrat called Netanyahu’s move an “unfortunate decision, the US is always by our side at the UN.”

Others, including those in government, condemned the prime minister’s choice will serve to escalate tensions between Israel and the United States even further.

War Cabinet Minister Benny Gantz, who joined the coalition last October, vowed that Israel wouldn't stop fighting until the war's goals were reached but also criticized Netanyahu for escalating the tensions with the United States.

“The Security Council's decision has no operational significance for us, and in any case, we will continue to listen to our friends, and we will always do what is right for Israel's security,” he stated.

“At the same time, it is important to remember – the special relationship between Israel and the U.S. is an anchor of Israel's security and foreign relations, and the direct dialogue with the American administration is an essential asset that must not be given up even when there are challenges and disputes.”

Gantz suggested that Netanyahu visit Washington and speak with U.S. President Joe Biden directly.

“The prime minister would do well if he, himself, traveled to the USA, and held a direct dialogue with President Biden and the senior administration officials,” Gantz wrote.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid stated: “There is one question we should ask ourselves about the crisis that Netanyahu has led to with the US: 'Is it good for Israel or bad for Israel?' The unequivocal answer is: 'Bad for Israel.'”

“Bad for security, bad for the economy, bad for the fight against the Iranian nuclear issue, bad for our international standing, bad for the hostages,” he added.



# [Two-Thirds of Americans Believe Jesus Physically Rose from the Dead: Survey - Michael Foust \(christianheadlines.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #americans, #resurrection, #jesus

Mar 27, 2024

Two-thirds of Americans say they believe Jesus physically rose from the dead, with nearly half of Americans saying they “strongly” believe in the historical event that forms the core of Easter, according to a Lifeway Research survey.

The survey found that 66 percent of Americans agree that the “biblical accounts of the physical (bodily) resurrection of Jesus are completely accurate.” A total of 47 percent of Americans say they “strongly” agree with the statement.

Among Americans who attend a religious service at least once or twice a month, 90 percent agree.

But many Americans don’t agree with the statement, with 23 percent saying they either somewhat or strongly disagree with it.

Jeremiah Johnston, author of *Body of Proof: A Study on the Resurrection of Jesus*, [says](#) the resurrection is key to the Christian faith. Johnston serves as the pastor of apologetics and cultural engagement at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas. Lifeway recently [spotlighted](#) Johnston’s book on its website.

“For the early church, Johnston says a belief in the resurrection ‘was no mere footnote but rather a focal point. Every Sunday was resurrection Sunday,’” the Lifeway story said. “Flowing out from this, he notes ‘Jesus’ resurrection is a central focus of our New Testament Scripture with over 300 verses referencing this truth. When we study what the Bible teaches about the resurrection of Jesus, we are struck by the power this singular historical event had on the early followers of Jesus.”

Too often, Johnston says, the resurrection is “under-lived because it is under-preached and under-studied by most pastors.” The result: A significant percentage of churchgoers -- even if it is a minority -- don’t believe in the resurrection. According to the Lifeway data, 26 percent of Christians associated with mainline churches don’t believe in a bodily resurrection.

“You cannot be a follower of Jesus if you deny the historical, physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ,” Johnston says. “I am surprised at how controversial this answer has been in modern media.”

The early Christians, he said, turned “the world upside down” because they saw Jesus after He rose from the dead.

“Our living hope is based on the historical, unchangeable fact of Jesus’ physical, bodily resurrection from the dead,” he said. “The Bible teaches us that in the resurrected Christ we have a ‘living hope’ ([1 Peter 1:3](#)), a ‘better hope’ ([Hebrews 7:19](#)), and a ‘sure’ hope ([Hebrews 6:19](#)).”

# Israel slams arms sale ban as Trudeau caves to minority party: 'history will judge' Canada 'harshly' | Fox News

#bibleprophecy, #canada, #anti-semitism, #israel

Mar 20, 2024

Canada has experienced an explosion of antisemitic activity with 132% increase in hate crimes

Canada has announced it will not export weapons to Israel anymore, drawing immediate [condemnation from the Israeli government](#).

"It's regrettable that the Canadian government is taking a step that undermines Israel's right to self-defense against Hamas terrorists, who have committed terrible crimes against humanity and against innocent Israeli civilians, including the elderly, women, and children," Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz wrote on X.

"History will judge Canada's current action harshly," Katz added. "Israel will [continue to fight until Hamas is destroyed](#) and all hostages are returned home."

The minority left-leaning New Democrats Party (NDP) in Canada drafted the initial motion to stop all future arms exports to Israel, but the government embraced the measure of its minority partner, The Times of Israel reported.

The original motion included a cease-fire measure, recognition of a Palestinian state and a weapons sales suspension, but the government negotiated several key changes, including a change to only seek the "establishment of the State of Palestine as part of a negotiated two-state solution," the Toronto Star reported.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberals Party and the NDP continued negotiating until the last moment on language and changes to different measures, such as adding a call for Hamas to disarm in order to include a call for a cease-fire.

A key language change from ending the trade of all "military goods and technology" to ending "the further authorization and transfer of arms exports." Both versions justified the measure as a concern that arms could end up in terrorist hands, saying that the motion aimed to "stop the illegal trade of arms, including to Hamas."

[Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister](#) Mélanie Joly confirmed that the government would end future sales of weapons to Israel, telling reporters, "It is a real thing" after the cabinet voted in support of the modified resolution.

Joly called the changes significant and not merely symbolic, and she warned that while the weapons ban will serve as policy, it remains to be seen how far it would extend in practice, The Toronto Star reported – partially because military gear exported to Israel is modified and shipped back for use by the Canadian armed forces.

Canada paused the export of non-lethal military gear to Israel since January as Trudeau, who has repeatedly [asserted Israel's right to defend itself](#), continues to take increasingly critical stances over the Israeli military operation in the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, Canada has been engulfed by probably the worst outbreak of antisemitism in its country's history. Casey Babb, who teaches courses on terrorism and international security at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs in Ottawa, told Fox News Digital that Canada has recently seen "unprecedented and horrific anti-Israel and anti-Jewish rhetoric and decision-making."

"The last time things in this country were so overtly injurious to the Jewish community, was when the government turned away Jews fleeing the Holocaust in the 1930's and 1940's," Babb argued. "While Israel is in a fight for its very survival on multiple fronts, and while it is waging a war against one of the most sadistic groups of people to ever walk the earth, Canada has decided now is a good time to halt arms sales and push for a two-state solution."

"It's hard to put into words how spineless and duplicitous these decisions are," Babb said, adding that "It's no wonder why the West is experiencing the worst surge in antisemitism it's seen in three-quarters of a century."

"When you signal to Islamists you have their back, when you signal to terrorists that their barbarism works, and when you signal to Jews their greatest value is being political pawns, you're going to see what we're experiencing today," Babb continued. "It must be said, and it must be acknowledged that these decisions are primarily hurting the hostages."

"Canada is essentially saying to them - just as it has said over the last five months - you're on your own," he said. "The government is telling children in the tunnels of Gaza - you had it coming."

Earlier in March, [hundreds of anti-Israel protesters](#) surrounded the Montreal Holocaust Museum and blocked access to a group of Israeli army reservists who were slated to speak. The antisemitic mob reportedly chanted "Death to Israel, death to the Jews."

The NDP has proven critical to keeping Trudeau in power, signing an agreement in March 2022 in which the NDP agreed to support the Liberals on key votes in exchange for action on NDP policy priorities. The agreement will last until 2025, when the next federal election will take place, and at which point the NDP has ruled out any possibility of a coalition government, CTV reported.

"That's off the table," NDP leader Jagmeet Singh told The Canadian Press during a year-end interview in Dec. 2023. "That's not something that we're focused on. We're focused on getting enough done in this Parliament and then running to win."

# [South Africa water crisis sees taps run dry across Johannesburg - CBS News](#)

#bibleprophecy, #south africa, #water, #thirst

Mar 21, 2024

*Johannesburg* — For two weeks, Tsholofelo Moloji has been among thousands of South Africans lining up for water as the country's largest city, Johannesburg, confronts an unprecedented collapse of its water system affecting millions of people.

Residents rich and poor have never seen a shortage of this severity. While hot weather has shrunk reservoirs, crumbling infrastructure after decades of neglect is also largely to blame. The public's frustration is a danger sign for the ruling African National Congress, whose comfortable hold on power since the end of apartheid in the 1990s faces its most serious challenge in an election this year.

A country already famous for its [hourslong electricity shortages](#) is now adopting a term called "watershedding" — the practice of going without water, from the term loadshedding, or the practice of going without power.

Moloji, a resident of Soweto on the outskirts of Johannesburg, isn't sure she or her neighbors can take much more.

They and others across South Africa's economic hub of about 6 million people line up day after day for the arrival of municipal tanker trucks delivering water. Before the trucks finally arrived the day before, a desperate Moloji had to request water from a nearby restaurant.

There was no other alternative. A 1.3-gallon bottle of water sells for 25 rand (\$1.30), an expensive exercise for most people in a country where over 32% of the population is unemployed.

"We are really struggling," Moloji said. "We need to cook, and children must also attend school. We need water to wash their clothes. It's very stressful."

Residents of Johannesburg and surrounding areas are long used to seeing water shortages — just not across the whole region at once.

Over the weekend, water management authorities with Gauteng province, which includes Johannesburg and the capital, Pretoria, told officials from both cities that the failure to reduce water consumption could result in a total collapse of the water system. That means reservoirs would drop below 10% capacity and would need to be shut down for replenishment.

That could mean weeks without water from taps — at a time when the hot weather is keeping demand for water high. The arrival of chilly winter in the Southern Hemisphere is still weeks away.

No drought has been officially declared, but officials are pleading with residents to conserve what water they can find. World Water Day on Friday is another reminder of the wider need to conserve.

Outraged activists and residents say this crisis has been years in the making. They blame officials' poor management and the failure to maintain aging water infrastructure. Much of it dates to the years just after the end of apartheid, when basic services were expanded to the country's Black population in an era of optimism.

The ANC long rode on that enthusiasm, but now many South Africans are asking what happened. In Johannesburg, run by a coalition of political parties, anger is against authorities in general as people wonder how maintenance of some of the country's most important economic engines went astray.

A report published last year by the national department of water and sanitation is damning. Its monitoring of water usage by municipalities found that 40% of Johannesburg's water is wasted through leaks, which includes burst pipes.

In recent days, even residents of Johannesburg's more affluent and swimming pool-dotted suburbs have found themselves relying on the arrival of municipal water tankers, which came as a shock to some.

Residents in one neighborhood, Blairgowrie, came out to protest after lacking water for nearly two weeks.

A local councilor in Soweto, Lefa Molise, told The Associated Press he was not optimistic that the water shortage would be resolved soon.

Water cuts have become so frequent that he urges residents to reserve any supply they can find, especially when he said authorities give little or no warning about upcoming shortages.

The water tankers are not enough to keep residents supplied, he added.

An older resident, Thabisile Mchunu, said her taps have been dry since last week. She now hauls what water she can find in 20-liter buckets.

"The sad thing is that we don't know when our taps are going to be wet again," she said.

Rand Water, the government entity that supplies water to more than a dozen municipalities in Gauteng province, this week pleaded with residents to reduce their

consumption. The interlinked reservoirs supplying its system are now at 30% capacity, and high demand on any of them affects them all.

Even South Africa's notoriously troubled electricity system has played a role in the water problem, at least in part.

On Tuesday, Johannesburg Mayor Kabelo Gwamanda said a power station that supplies electricity to one of the city's major water pumping stations had been struck by lightning, causing the station to fail.



# [Poll: Church Attendance Declines Among Most U.S. Religious Groups \(breitbart.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #church, #attendance, #united states, #apostasy

Mar 25, 2024

The past several years have reflected an overall decline in religious service attendance among Americans, [according](#) to data from Gallup.

Between 2021 and 2023, 30 percent of Americans said they attended religious services every week (21 percent) or almost every week (nine percent). At the same time, only 11 percent reported attending once a month, and 56 percent said they seldom (25 percent) or never (31 percent) attended.

“Two decades ago, an average of 42 percent of U.S. adults attended religious services every week or nearly every week. A decade ago, the figure fell to 38 percent, and it is currently at 30 percent,” Gallup Senior Editor Jeffrey Jones wrote. “This decline is largely driven by the increase in the percentage of Americans with no religious affiliation — 9 percent in 2000-2003 versus 21 percent in 2021-2023 — almost all of whom do not attend services regularly.”

Among major religious groups in the United States, members of the Mormon Church reported being the most observant, with 67 percent saying they attended church weekly or nearly weekly.

“Protestants (including nondenominational Christians) rank second, with 44 percent attending services regularly, followed by Muslims (38 percent) and Catholics (33 percent),” according to the survey.

“Majorities of Jewish, Orthodox, Buddhist and Hindu Americans say they seldom or never attend religious services,” the report continues. “Twenty-six percent of Orthodox adults, 22 percent of Jewish adults, 14 percent of Buddhist adults and 13 percent of Hindu adults attend services regularly.”

Those with no religious affiliation, including those who identify as agnostic or atheist, are unlikely to attend religious services, although three percent say they attend weekly or nearly weekly.

Among various religious groups, Catholics have shown one of the largest drops in attendance between 2000 and 2023, 45 percent to 33 percent. The survey found

slightly smaller decreases among Orthodox (nine percentage points) and Hindus (eight percentage points).

The group with the largest drop in that time frame are those who identify with “other” religious groups, “generally those not large enough to report separately as their own group or those that are difficult to categorize based on respondents’ answers,” Jones wrote. This group saw a 24-point decline in two decades.

In contrast, Muslim and Jewish Americans “have shown slight increases in religious service attendance over the past two decades,” according to the survey report.

Muslim adults who regularly attend mosque was up to 34 percent between 2021 and 2023 compared to 34 percent between 2000 and 2003. However, the most recent percentage is lower than 46 percent between 2011 and 2013.

Jewish Americans have also been increasingly attending synagogue, from 15 percent two decades ago to 19 percent and 22 percent between 2021 and 2023, respectively.

Jones projected that church attendance “will likely continue to decline in the future, given younger American’s weaker attachments to religion.”

“Specifically, more 18- to 29-year-olds, 35 percent, say they have no religious preference than identify with any specific faith, such as Protestant/nondenominational Christian (32 percent) or Catholic (19 percent),” Jones wrote. “Additionally, young adults, both those with and without a religious preference, are much less likely to attend religious services — 22 percent attend regularly, eight points below the national average.”

Other polls in recent years have found that Americans [perceive](#) a decrease in religious influence in the United States and [place less value](#) on their children sharing their religious views. Recently, the Pew Research Center [found](#) that 80 percent of U.S. adults say religion’s role in American life is shrinking — “a percentage that’s as high as it’s ever been.”

Results for the Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted between 2021 and 2023 with 32,445 U.S. adults. The margin of sampling error is  $\pm$  one percentage point at the 95 percent confidence level.