



U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham in Israel:

Decision on Iran to take ‘weeks, not months’

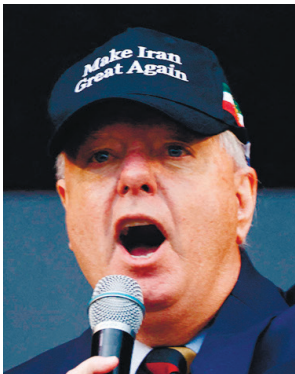
Liza Rozovsky, Ben Samuels and Haaretz

Iran and the United States are due to begin a second round of negotiations about Tehran's nuclear program in Geneva on Tuesday.

U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham addressed the ongoing nuclear talks and the threat of U.S. military intervention while speaking at a news conference in Tel Aviv on Monday. “There are two lines in the water right now: one is a diplomatic line trying to find a way to end this regime diplomatically that will advance our national security interest. The other line is the military option. I think Trump is looking for which line can catch the biggest fish,” he said.

He said that decision-making would be a matter of “weeks – not months.” He commended anti-regime protesters in Iran, saying, “The best answer to all the problems created by Iran is regime change and for the people to take the place of the ayatollah. I don't believe they're in the streets to build more nuclear weapons, they're in the streets to have a better life.” He said that the United States must “meet the moment,” and that the Iranian regime is “at their weakest point since 1979.”

Regarding the risk of an Iranian response to a U.S.



Graham *Michaela Stache/AFP*

Life in Gaza during Ramadan
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strike, Graham said, “Could our soldiers be hit in the region? Absolutely they could. Can Iran respond if we have an all-out attack? Absolutely they can. I think the risk associated with that is far less than the risk associated with blinking and pulling the plug and not helping the people as you promised.”

Over in Jerusalem, Ambassador Huckabee told the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in Jerusalem that there is “legitimate doubt” Iran would compromise in talks with the United States, and that he is “willing

to stand in the middle” if another war between Israel and Iran is launched.

The ambassador said that what he can disclose from the recent meeting between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Donald Trump on Iran is that “the United States and Israel are absolutely aligned in understanding that Iran must be dealt with. It cannot continue as it is. It cannot remain a nuclear threat or continue building vast surpluses of ballistic missiles aimed not just at Israel, but at the world.”

“Israel stands in the way of Iran's ultimate goal: the destruction and annihilation of American culture,” the ambassador said.

He added that ahead of additional talks between the U.S. and Iran, “There is legitimate doubt that Iran would agree to abandon nuclear ambitions, stop enriching uranium, or dismantle its ballistic missile stockpile. If they were willing to do so, recognizing that the consequences of refusing could be far worse than last year's 12-day war, I would welcome it. But those are two very big ifs.”

“I told the president at the White House that I hope, somehow, miraculously, a deal could be reached that

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The scene of the killing in Umm al-Fahm on Monday.

Rami Shlush

Three Israelis, including father and son, killed in 24 hours; murder rate climbs to 52

Josh Breiner, Ido Efrati and Deiaa Haj Yahia

A father and son were shot to death inside a car on Monday in an Arab town in northern Israel, while a third person was fatally shot in a suspected revenge killing hours later, raising Israel's total homicides this year to 52, including

47 from the country's Arab community.

Abdel Karim, 22, and Ahmed Abu Ghazaleh, 46, were murdered in Umm al-Fahm while they were inside the vehicle, causing it to overturn. Police say that the two men had no criminal record and no known ties to criminal organizations.

A few hours later, a man was fatally shot in Tamra. According to initial suspicions, the shooting was revenge for the murder of a woman last Thursday.

On Saturday, two young men in their 20s were shot to death in two separate incidents in Nazareth and in the south. In Nazareth, a young man was found in

his vehicle with “severe gunshot wounds to his body,” while a few hours later, a young man was shot to death in southern Israel. The police announced that the background to both incidents was criminal.

On Thursday evening, Wafaa Awad, 55, was fatally shot in the Arab city of Tamra in northern Israel,

becoming the sixth person killed in the Arab community in 24 hours. Tamra residents said Awad was shot in the head outside her home. They said that she was not the intended target of the shooting, which was aimed at a nearby house. Police said they have opened an investigation into the case.

Police tear-gas Bedouin elementary school during classes **Eden Solomon** *Page 4*

Three arrested for crossing into Syria in call for Jewish settlements

Adi Hashmonai and Yaniv Kubovich

The military arrested three right-wing activists who crossed into Syria overnight into Monday in a supposed attempt to found a Jewish settlement there.

Israel Defense Forces' troops apprehended the three activists several hours after they crossed the bor-

der, handing them over to the police. The Kiryat Shmona Magistrate's Court turned down a police request to extend their arrest by a week, and approved only a 24-hour extension.

After their arrest, the three activists defended their actions. “We will continue relentlessly until the Israeli government recognizes the importance of Jew-

ish settlement in the Bashan region and allows us to settle there,” they said, using the biblical term for the part of southern Syria that borders the Golan Heights.

Their lawyer – from the nonprofit Honenu, a right-wing legal aid nonprofit – said: “This is an act of protest intended to convey a message demanding settlement, and that is how things

should be viewed,” adding that their release should be ordered immediately.

In August, dozens of Israelis, including parents with children, crossed the border fence on the Golan Heights in what they called an attempt to establish an outpost in Syria. Police, who said the group had been summoned for questioning, reported that the activists

had crossed the border by vehicle northeast of the Golan Heights' Alonei Habashan.

Activists said had been in Syria for about two hours. The army had called the move “a serious incident constituting a criminal offense [that] endangers the public and Israeli forces.”

“It was a bit of a surprise that it took the IDF so much

time to get here, but on the other hand, we didn't break through the fence – the fence was simply open,” said Amos Azaria, a member of a group called the “Pioneers of the Bashan,” a new organization that calls for Jewish settlement in the Syrian Golan. “This isn't Syrian territory, we were in the territory of the Bashan. Since the Assad re-

gime fell last December, it's been under complete Israeli control. This place needs, of course, to be annexed immediately.”

After another attempt to cross into Syria in November, the activists wrote, “God be praised, we had the privilege of walking through the Bashan – the land of our forefathers.” On social media, they urged the govern-

ment “to allow us to continue holding the Bashan and not to expel us from here. Settling the Bashan will bring security to the Golan and to all of Israel.”

“Pioneers of the Bashan” was formed in April 2025, when dozens of Israelis, including parents with children, crossed into Syria in another supposed attempt to establish an outpost.

Ancient factory for stone ‘Jewish’ kitchenware found in Jerusalem



Stone vessels from the Second Temple period.

Yoli Schwartz/Israel Antiquities Authority

Ruth Schuster

Treasures from antiquity hidden in Israel's soil are supposed to stay there until being gingerly unearthed by archaeologists, but looters have always posed serious competition. On Monday the Israel Antiquities Authority revealed the discovery of a large workshop in Jerusalem that manufactured ‘Jewish’ kitchenware from limestone some 2,000 years ago,

thanks to thieves caught red-handed.

The would-be robbers were not slinking quietly and unobtrusively through the night, prying with shaking fingers at the cold stone. Israel's antiquities thieves are a nervy lot. The Israel Antiquities Authority says that five “alleged robbers” were arrested with extensive machinery and quarrying equipment, electricity generators and a metal detector.

Actually after their capture in situ, all confessed, says Dr. Amir Ganor, head of the IAA Theft Prevention Unit. “Some suspects were caught underground in the cave, while others acting as lookouts and guards were apprehended above ground,” the IAA stated.

In fact the doughty Theft Prevention inspectors had been lying in wait for the thieves at the site of Ras Tammim, an Iron Age spot

on the slopes of Mount Scopus where water cisterns and a dovecote in a cave have previously been reported. Antiquities inspectors routinely comb the Land of Israel for signs of illegal activity and noticed that a fresh excavation had commenced there, where none had been approved.

Before breaking ground at any site in Israel, even if not for the first time – the Israel Antiquities Authority must approve the dig, and budgets and plans must be arranged. Inspectors had noticed disturbance at Ras Tammim – in other words, signs of digging where none had been approved. The antiquities inspectors lurked in wait for several nights and finally, when the robbers came back to continue the illegal excavation they had begun, they were caught in the act.

They turned out to be locals, living in East Jerusalem, Ganor tells Haaretz by telephone. “After we caught them, we realized they had exposed a Second Temple-period workshop that had been previously unknown. It's a very important discovery – we know of stoneware workshops in the Jerusalem

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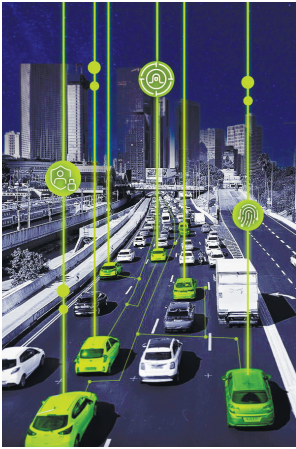
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Simulation: Shutterstock; Artwork by Yael Aharonovich

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First Israeli in NBA All-Star game

Deni Avdija says he ‘proudly represented Israel’ on World team

Yan Melnikov

Deni Avdija became the first Israeli basketball player to play in an NBA All-Star Game on Sunday, scoring five points over two matches for the World team, which was eliminated before the finals.

He completed the first All-Star week of his career with four assists, a rebound, and a turnover, playing under the All-Star Game's new format against the Stripes and the Stars teams.

Speaking with Haaretz, the Portland Trail Blazers star said he represented Israel in the All-Star Game with honor and hopes to do it again.

“I woke up excited, but as soon as I put on my uniform in the locker room, I felt like in any regular game,” Avdija told Haaretz. “This is my first All-Star Game, and you don't know what to expect,” he said. “You go with the game, you don't think. I played as much as I could. I enjoyed it.”

He continued, “I'm on a stage I don't get to be on every day. Not everyone gets to be on it. Being on this court, just running is an honor, and fun. I'm happy.”

The game was “an amazing experience, one of the wildest I've had,” Avdija



Avdija in action during the 75th NBA All-Star Game at Intuit Dome on Sunday.

Ronald Muir/Getty Images via AFP

said. “I know that many in Israel watched the game and cheered. I felt like I got to play for an entire nation. It's fun to show that it's possible in a small country like ours.”

He thanked his fans “for the support, for the push that helped me get to this game, for the love. I'm speechless.” According to him, the most memorable part was “getting on the court with the players, in Los Angeles, the Israeli flag on your back, when they hear your name.”

Avdija told Haaretz that his goal is “getting into the All-Star Game again, reaching the playoffs with my

team, improving as a player, gaining experience, winning titles. There's no limit to what I can achieve. Only time will tell. I'm enjoying the journey. All I can ask for is for this to happen again.”

Shortly before the game, power forward LeBron James praised Avdija, saying he is “playing exceptional basketball.”

“I've been quoted on Deni already, and they asked me what I thought about this season. I said I believe he was an all-star, and I mean, he is an all-star,” he said.

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