

IDF says it failed to protect kibbutz

Israeli leadership under pressure to account for Oct. 7 security lapses

BY LOVEDAY MORRIS, ADELA SULIMAN AND LIOR SOROKA

The Israeli military on Thursday released the results of its first internal probe into the Hamas attacks on Oct. 7, admitting to major failings in the defense of Kibbutz Beeri, a hard-hit town on the Gaza border, but falling short of holding individual commanders to account and leaving key questions unanswered.

The report said “severe mistakes and errors” were made in the army response as Hamas overran the community. The army was underprepared, it said, and did not always prioritize civilian lives. The report detailed how in the afternoon, Israel Defense Forces units waited nearby even as residents were killed.

“From the afternoon hours onwards, forces were waiting outside the kibbutz while the massacre continued inside,” it said. “The IDF did not fulfill its mission to defend the residents in the most grave manner and failed in its mission.”

Military officials presented the findings to the surviving members of the community at the Dead Sea resort they now call home. A total of 101 people died in Beeri — one-tenth of its population — as Hamas fighters from Gaza broke through Israel’s high-tech border fence and took military units by surprise.

Dozens more were taken hostage, 11 of whom have yet to be released.

Up and down the border, outgunned community guards and residents were left fighting virtually alone.

“We failed to protect the kibbutz,” Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, an IDF spokesman, conceded as he spoke to residents, according to Israeli press reports. He noted that the IDF probe fell short of a wider independent commission of inquiry that he said “should be established.”

SEE ISRAEL ON A9

Gaza pier: The mission, plagued by setbacks, will cease operations. A9



DEMETRIUS FREEMAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

President Biden fields questions Thursday night at a news conference that was ostensibly about the end of the NATO summit in Washington but dominated by questions over Biden’s advanced age and precarious political standing after the June 27 debate.

Most Democrats want Biden to bow out, poll finds

BY DAN BALZ, SCOTT CLEMENT AND EMILY GUSKIN

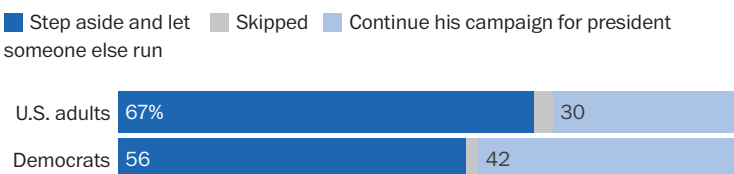
Most Democrats nationwide say that President Biden should end his reelection campaign based on his performance in the presidential debate two weeks ago, according to a Washington Post-ABC News-Ipsos poll.

The poll results contradict Biden’s claim that only party elites want him to step aside. He has said that positive interactions with supporters on the campaign trail have helped persuade him to stay in the race after a debate in which he trailed off and occasionally appeared confused. But the poll finds that 56 percent of Democrats say that he should end his candidacy, while 42 percent say he should continue to seek reelection. Overall, 2 in 3 adults say the president should step aside, including more than 7 in 10 independents.

The poll finds Biden and for-

Should Biden step aside or continue his campaign?

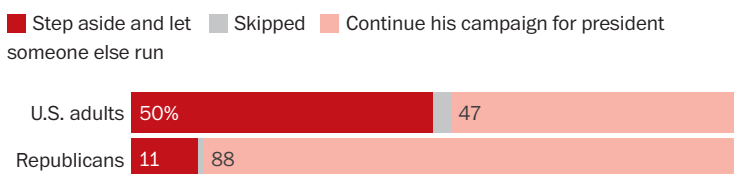
Q: Given his performance in the debate, which of these do you think Biden should do?



Source: July 5-9, 2024, Washington Post-ABC News-Ipsos poll of 2,431 U.S. adults with a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points and 825 Democrats with a margin of 3.5 points.

Should Trump step aside or continue his campaign?

Q: Given his performance in the debate, which of these do you think Trump should do?



Source: July 5-9, 2024, Washington Post-ABC News-Ipsos poll of 2,431 U.S. adults with a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points and 697 Republicans with a margin of 4 points.

mer president Donald Trump in a close contest for the popular vote, with both candidates receiving 46 percent support among registered voters. Those numbers are nearly identical to the results of an ABC-Ipsos poll in April.

That finding is at odds with some other recent public polls. Across eight other post-debate national polls tracked by The Post, Trump leads by 3.5 percentage points on average, compared with a one-point Trump edge in those same polls before the debate. Biden led Trump by between nine and 11 points in averages of public polls at this point in the campaign four years ago. He ended up winning by 4.5 points.

The president and his campaign team have spent the week seeking to enlist support from important Democratic Party constituencies, including the Congressional Black Caucus, labor leaders and key progressive legis-

SEE POLL ON A5

Biden defends fitness at Q&A

SHOWS KNOWLEDGE, HAS SOME FUMBLES

3 more Democrats join chorus calling for his exit

BY TOLUSE OLORUNNIPA, YASMEEN ABUTALEB AND MICHAEL BIRNBAUM

President Biden, in a pivotal news conference designed to save his candidacy, showed moments of fluency and command of detail as he parried questions from journalists, but he also stumbled over words, conflated names and at times gave meandering answers.

The result was a mixed performance in a much-anticipated event that many Democrats had been anxiously awaiting to see if Biden could allay their fears about his age, mental agility and ability to defeat Republican Donald Trump. The reaction of those Democrats in coming days could clarify the course of Biden’s candidacy and whether he will be able to withstand mounting calls from within his party to step aside.

In one of the more jarring moments, Biden mistakenly referred to Vice President Harris as “Vice President Trump.” The flub came hours after a separate event during the NATO summit in Washington when Biden introduced Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as Russian President Vladimir Putin, immediately correcting himself.

In an indication that the news conference would not halt the calls for him to end his candidacy, three additional Democrats—Reps. Jim Himes of Connecticut, Scott Peters of California and Eric Sorensen of Illinois — issued

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NATO concerns: GOP leaders aim to quell fears of Trump. A12

Steering the conversation: When is the right time to give up keys? C1

Searing heat is grounding air ambulances in Calif.

BY RUBY MELLEN

STANFORD, CALIF. — The call came at 2 p.m. Sunday: A driver suffered a brain injury in a traffic accident and needed to be flown to a different hospital as soon as possible.

Lead helicopter pilot Douglas Evans noted the 116.6-degree temperature in Redding, Calif., where he would need to land. The tarmac was probably even hotter. In 27 years of operating medical helicopters around California, Evans had never had to cancel a flight because of excessive heat — until now.

It was too hot to fly.

Evans and other emergency responder pilots are used to factoring California’s wind, fog and fire smoke into their flight decisions. But extreme heat, like the intense wave blanketing the West right now, is affecting the way rescue helicopters can carry out their missions.

High temperatures, which are increasing due to human-caused climate change, are altering oper-

SEE HEAT ON A7



PHILIP CHEUNG FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Members of Stanford Life Flight conduct a landing zone drill in Kings Mountain, Calif., on July 6. The wave of excessive heat in the West has made it too hot for rescue helicopters to conduct their missions.

As inflation eases, rate cuts could come soon

Prices cool more than expected, but good news is upstaged by turmoil

BY RACHEL SIEGEL

Inflation eased more than expected in June, handing Federal Reserve officials another dose of encouraging data as they inch closer to cutting interest rates and giving long-awaited relief to households and businesses.

Data released Thursday by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that prices climbed 3 percent compared with last year, an improvement from the 3.3 percent annual figure notched in May. Prices also fell 0.1 percent over the previous month.

Additionally, a key measure of inflation that strips out more volatile categories such as food and energy rose 3.3 percent over

the past 12 months — the smallest annual increase since April 2021.

Joe Brusuelas, chief economist at RSM, summed it up this way: “It’s better than good.”

But housing costs continue to be a major driver of overall inflation and have proved hard to tame since there aren’t enough homes available in America. Overall, shelter costs were up 5.2 percent over the year. But they cooled off compared with the previous month, suggesting long-awaited progress is finally breaking through.

The upbeat inflation news was touted by the White House, especially cooling prices for big budget items like cars, appliances, airfares and groceries. The White House also noted its own policies for beating back inflation. Yet political turmoil overshadowed one of the best inflation reports of Biden’s presidency in another example of how difficult it has been for Democrats to sell a strong

SEE INFLATION ON A14

IN THE NEWS

Anger over outages About 500,000 Houston residents are expected to remain without power into next week amid sweltering heat following Hurricane Beryl’s destruction. A18

‘So much energy and life’ A D.C. woman killed by a falling tree branch had a “huge heart and wonderful soul.” B1

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A study found long covid develops in nearly 1 in 10 people infected while pregnant. A4

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A 163-unit apartment building is the first office-to-housing conversion project to be completed in D.C. B1

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Jasmine Paolini of Italy advanced to the Wimbledon women’s final with a marathon victory over Donna Vekic. D1

WEEKEND
As summer sizzles, we help you find the best beaches within driving distance of the Washington region.

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