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Netanyahu said to insist PA have no role in Gaza as US pushes Trump's plan to end war

Israeli TV says PM has recently informed US of several red lines regarding Strip's future; Trump reportedly pleased he 'has so far managed to keep both sides in line' amid ceasefire

By [Nava Freiberg](#)

and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 3:50 am



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu holds a press conference with US Vice President JD Vance at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem, October 22, 2025. (Marc Israel Sellem/POOL)

While meeting Wednesday with US Vice President JD Vance, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed willingness to assist in implementing the next stages of Washington's Gaza ceasefire and hostage release plan, Israeli television reported, as the Trump administration pushes to advance its proposal for ending the Israel-Hamas war.

Citing American and Israeli officials familiar with the discussions, Channel 12 news said Vance urged

Netanyahu to give Washington time to roll out the plan, to which the premier responded by showing a readiness to cooperate in the coming phases.

In a separate report, the **network said that Netanyahu outlined several red lines to the US in recent days, including absolute opposition to any Turkish presence in the Gaza Strip and to the Palestinian Authority or Hamas playing a governing role there "the day after" the war.** He is also said to have **insisted that a full IDF withdrawal could only take place after Hamas is fully disarmed and the Strip demilitarized.**

However, an **Israeli security official told Channel 12 that Washington views Turkey as essential to the plan's success and sees no viable alternative to** eventual Palestinian Authority involvement, a point that could force Netanyahu into compromise as Washington's pressure increases.

A **source close to US President Donald Trump was quoted by the network as saying that he is pleased "the United States has so far managed to keep both sides in line,"** referring to Israel and Hamas. **[Trump is treading on dangerous ground when he has decided that he rules the world and can play God. There is a God in Heaven who ultimately calls all the shots and we know what will happen from His prophets and His word. The Scriptures say that the Holy one told Abraham I will bless those that bless you and curse those that curse you and Trump with his arrogance has just cursed Israel and her people. The US will receive HIS judgement before it is over. rdb**

The network added that Trump's top envoys, **Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, departed Israel for Riyadh late Tuesday night, where they met with senior Saudi officials to further rally support for the deal.** From Riyadh, they continued to Abu Dhabi on Wednesday for meetings with Emirati officials toward the same goal.

The meetings in both countries were **aimed at mobilizing financial, military, and diplomatic backing from Arab states for the deal.**

The Channel 12 reporting came after Netanyahu's office [vowed](#) to The Times of Israel earlier Wednesday that "there will be no Turkish involvement" in the planned International Stabilization Force, which Trump's 20-point plan for Gaza envisions will secure the Strip during a transitional postwar period following Israel's withdrawal and the disarmament of Hamas.

According to a Sky News Arabia report denied by the Prime Minister's Office, Netanyahu and Egypt's intelligence chief disagreed over potential Turkish involvement during a meeting the previous day. That report also said Netanyahu "completely rejected" the deployment of Palestinian Authority security forces trained by Egypt and Jordan in Gaza, in a reiteration of his stance against having the PA play any role in the enclave.

Rubio due to arrive for multiday visit

Following Vance and the Trump envoys, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio was due to arrive



in Israel on Thursday, with **the State Department saying the purpose of the trip is “to support the successful implementation of President Trump’s Comprehensive Plan to End the Conflict in Gaza, which has garnered unprecedented international support.”**

“During his visit, the secretary will reaffirm America’s unwavering commitment to Israel’s security and engage with partners to build on the historic momentum towards durable peace and integration in the Middle East,” added a State Department statement. **I don’t believe the US support is unwavering at all. It dependent on submitting to**

Trump’s desire for fame and a peace prize even if it means the end of Israel. Remember Zacariah says the entire world will stand against you oh Jerusalem and with the US on this track that will be the final piece in the puzzle. Trust NO ONE but the Lord Himself. rdb

Rubio is **scheduled to be in Israel until Saturday, before then visiting Malaysia, Japan and South Korea.**

It was not immediately clear if he would be in Israel at the same time as Vance, who is slated to visit Tel Aviv on Thursday, [resulting in major street closures](#).

Vance on Wednesday toured the City of David National Park near Jerusalem’s Old City tonight, according to a spokesperson for the site. Signing the guestbook at the park, Vance wrote: “Thank you for preserving this place, a global heritage site for all the children of Abraham.”

During his visit, the vice president walked the entire length of the recently opened Pilgrimage Road — a newly excavated tunnel that foundation archaeologists say was used during the Second Temple period (516 BCE–70 CE) by Jewish pilgrims making their way to the Temple Mount, the holiest site for Jews.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks at the inauguration of Pilgrims’ Road, in the City of David archeological park in Jerusalem, on September 15, 2025. (Koby Harati/City of David)

Last month, Rubio [participated in the opening ceremony](#) of the road, alongside Netanyahu and US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee.

Rubio’s participation drew attention to controversy over the site’s location in East Jerusalem’s Silwan neighborhood, amid reports at the time that the secretary was supportive of Israel annexing the West Bank in response to Western states recognizing a Palestinian state.

The visit underscored the Trump administration’s continued backing of initiatives viewed by critics as reinforcing Israel’s claims to East Jerusalem, which Palestinians regard as the capital of a future state.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-said-to-insist-pa-have-no-role-in-gaza-as-us-pushes-trumps-plan-to-end-war/>

Rubio: Knesset approval of Israeli sovereignty in West Bank threatens Gaza deal

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio cautioned that Israel’s plan to advance a bill applying sovereignty in the West Bank risks undermining the Gaza ceasefire deal ahead of his visit to Israel.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) OCTOBER 23, 2025 03:53 Updated: OCTOBER 23, 2025 04:12



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrives before President Donald Trump speaks to the Knesset, Monday, October 13, 2025, in Jerusalem; illustrative.(photo credit: EVAN VUCCI/POOL VIA REUTERS)

The Knesset’s approval of advancing a bill to apply Israeli sovereignty in the West Bank poses a threat to the Gaza ceasefire deal, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio commented on Wednesday night.

The bill Rubio referred to is titled “Application of Israeli Sovereignty in Judea and Samaria,

2025,” and was initiated by far Right MK Avi Maoz (Noam).

The vote passed by a narrow margin of 25-24 following a heated discussion in the Knesset. It will now be transferred to the Knesset’s Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, where it will need to be brought up for discussion before undergoing a second and third vote in the plenum.

Hamas [released a statement](#) decrying the bill, saying the move “reflects the ugly face of the colonial occupation” in a statement on Wednesday.

The terror group's statement called the bill a "flagrant violation of all relevant international laws and resolutions," while also arguing that Israel "insists on continuing its attempts to 'legitimize' settlements and impose Zionist 'sovereignty' over the occupied Palestinian territories."

It continued, "We affirm that the occupation's frantic attempts to annex West Bank lands are invalid and illegitimate and will not change the fact that the West Bank is Palestinian territory according to history, international law, and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice issued in 2024."

Rubio to visit Israel on Thursday

Rubio is set to arrive in Israel on Thursday for a 48-hour trip.

His arrival will follow that of US Vice President [JD Vance](#), who touched down in Israel on Tuesday. US President Donald Trump's envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff are also in Israel. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-871348>

Smotrich on Saudi normalization: ‘No thank you, keep riding camels’

Opposition denounces finance minister’s ignorance, as he rejects idea of Palestinian state, defying Riyadh’s precondition for diplomatic ties, ahead of Trump-Saudi talks; he later apologizes

By [Ariela Karmel](#)

Today, 3:12 pm Updated at 5:08 pm



Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich speaking at the Knesset plenum, Jerusalem, September 29, 2025. (Oren Ben Hakoon/Flash90)

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said Thursday that he wouldn’t agree to a normalization agreement with Saudi Arabia if it meant the establishment of a Palestinian state, disparagingly saying the Saudis could “keep riding camels.”

“If Saudi Arabia tells us ‘normalization in exchange for a Palestinian state,’ friends — no thank you. Keep riding camels in the desert in Saudi Arabia, and we will continue to develop with the economy, society and state and the

great things that we know how to do,” Smotrich said, speaking at a conference called “Halacha in the Technological Era” organized by the Zomet Institute and the Makor Rishon newspaper.

Smotrich was denounced by several opposition leaders, who accused him of ignorance and causing harm, said he did not represent Israel, and demanded he apologize.

The far-right Religious Zionism party leader apologized a few hours later, with a caveat: “My comment about Saudi Arabia was absolutely inappropriate, and I apologize for the insult it caused,” he wrote. At the same time, he added, “I expect from the Saudis not to do us harm and not to deny our heritage, our tradition and the rights of the Jewish people to its historic homelands in Judea and Samaria, and to establish true peace with us.”

His comments came following Wednesday’s vote in the Knesset to [pass a bill](#) in its preliminary reading that would apply Israeli sovereignty to West Bank settlements, despite opposition from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Likud party.

Many in Netanyahu’s coalition have been loudly calling to advance annexation as a response to the recognition of a Palestinian state by Western powers last month. In early September, Smotrich publicly called for the annexation of [82 percent](#) of the West Bank, even as regional countries warned that such a move would spell the end of Israel’s integration into the Middle East.

It **could also lead to a crisis with US President Donald Trump, who has ruled out such a move** — he stated last month that he would not allow Israel to annex the West Bank — prompting Netanyahu's coalition allies to demand that the premier ignore Washington.

Further complicating matters, the US president is planning to host Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the White House in November to discuss, among other things, advancing an [Israel-Saudi normalization](#) agreement.



US President Donald Trump, right, greets Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud during a summit on Gaza in Sharm el-Sheikh on October 13, 2025. (Photo by Evan Vucci / POOL / AFP)

Riyadh has long insisted that it will only normalize ties with Israel if Jerusalem agrees to establish a time-bound, irreversible pathway to a future Palestinian state — a condition Smotrich and other members of Netanyahu's right-wing government vehemently oppose. **If they want a "PA" state then make one in Saudi, they have plenty of room, but they don't want to deal with the rabble in the "PA" and they are just as anxious to be rid of Israel as the rest of the Islamic entities.**

- rdb

Saudi **Arabia immediately denounced the Knesset's Wednesday vote in favor of the annexation bills, saying they were aimed at "legitimizing Israeli sovereignty over illegal colonial settlement."**

"The kingdom stresses its complete rejection of all settlements and expansionist violations perpetrated by the Israeli occupation authorities," the Saudi foreign ministry said in a statement on Thursday. "The kingdom reiterates its support for the inherent and historical right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with relevant international resolutions."

Smotrich's comments provoked criticism from opposition figures including Opposition Leader Yair Lapid, who wrote in a post on X, "Instead of trying to advance agreements that could change the Middle East, members of this government are speaking like the lowest-tier Twitter users, making harmful statements." A "PA" state is another form of Islamic submission to the demonic god of islam.

rdb

"This is not how you lead change. Smotrich must apologize," the Yesh Atid party leader demanded.

He added in an Arabic-language tweet, "To our friends in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, Smotrich does not represent the State of Israel."

"Instead of normalization with Saudi Arabia, Netanyahu and Smotrich's coalition chooses Hamas and Qatar in Gaza," said Yair Golan, leader of the left-wing Democrats party.



Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich gestures toward a map of the West Bank during a press conference at the Finance Ministry in Jerusalem, September 3, 2025. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

"The people of Israel are not the government, and certainly not Smotrich, who wouldn't even pass the electoral threshold, yet dares to threaten Saudi Arabia and declare there will be no Palestinian state — because the Palestinian Authority is a burden and Hamas is an asset — the exact same cursed policy that led to October 7," he said, adding that "boycotting the Saudis is a reward for Hamas and will help them maintain control in the Gaza Strip, just as Smotrich wants."

Blue and White leader Benny Gantz said that Smotrich's comments "indicate ignorance and a lack of internalization of his responsibility as a senior minister in the government and cabinet."

"Israel deserves a government free of extremists, in which ministers will care about the future of the country, and not about a few more likes," he added. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/smotrich-on-saudi-normalization-no-thank-you-keep-riding-camels/>

Trump vows to block West Bank annexation after Knesset vote

President says Israel will 'lose all US support' if it pushes sovereignty in West Bank, reaffirming his commitment to Arab backing and Gaza deal

ynet|08:07

One day after the Knesset passed a preliminary vote to apply Israeli sovereignty in the West Bank, U.S. President Donald Trump pledged in a new interview published Thursday that he will not permit such a move.

"It won't happen. It won't happen," Trump told TIME magazine, adding, "It won't happen because I gave my word to the Arab countries. And you can't do that now. We've had great Arab support... Israel would lose all of its support from the United States if that happened.



US President Donald Trump (Photo: AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

In the wide-ranging interview, conducted last week, **Trump also addressed multiple Middle East issues, including normalization with Saudi Arabia, talks with Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas and the proposed release of high-profile convicted Palestinian terrorist Marwan Barghouti, ultimately not freed.** The magazine devoted its cover to "Trump's world" following a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

The **president said that he told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu he couldn't "fight the world" in a conversation they had on October 4. He noted that "the world was tired of us attacking... I said to Bibi, 'Bibi, you can't fight the world. You can fight individual battles, but the world's against you. And Israel is a very small place compared to the world.'" Trump is correct that Bibi can't fight the world but the King of Kings and the world's Creator can fight the world and His word has told us the HE will and the world including Trump loses because The Creator established the plan from the foundation of the world and men who understand nothing of the Scriptures will not accept the reality of HIS power until they become removed by The Holy One. rdb**

According to **Trump, "I stopped him, because he would have just kept going. It could have gone on for years. It would have gone on for years. And I stopped him, and everybody came together when I stopped**, it was amazing. And when he made that one tactical mistake, the one on Qatar, and that was terrible, but actually, and I actually told the emir, this was one of the things that brought us all together, because it was so out of joint that it sort of got everybody to do what they have to do."

The **president also claimed that he planned to visit the Gaza Strip, but did not specify when or how.** "I will. Yeah, I will," he replied. "[W]e have the Board of Peace, and it's set up. They asked me to be the chairman. It was not something I wanted to do, believe me, but the Board of Peace is going to be a very powerful group of people, and it's going to have a lot of power in terms of the Middle East. The Middle East has never been brought together. It's really been brought together now, other than Hamas, which is a fringe group, and Hamas has, in theory, been brought together too, they signed the document. You know, they agreed to all this stuff. Now they can go against it. That's fine, and then nobody would mind if we went in and took them to task."

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/h1mqwivcle> Be ready for the retribution of The Holy One on the US for the audacity and impertinence of our elected leader.

Senior Israeli official says 'UNRWA will no longer set foot in Gaza' despite ICJ ruling - KAN
Israel says it will not allow UNRWA to operate in Gaza despite an ICJ urging it to support UN relief efforts,

citing past UN failures

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) OCTOBER 23, 2025 11:26

Smoke billows from an evacuated UNRWA school following Israeli airstrikes, at al-Shati (Beach) refugee camp, in Gaza City, September 13, 2025. (photo credit: Ebrahim Hajjaj/Reuters)

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the UN agency that operates for the benefit of Palestinian refugees, to enter the Gaza Strip, will not have future involvement in the Gaza Strip, a senior Israeli official told Israeli public broadcaster KAN News on Thursday.



"As far as we are concerned, UNRWA will no longer set foot in Gaza," the official said.

The **official's comments come despite the International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivering an advisory opinion on Wednesday that Israel should be forced to support the relief efforts provided by the UN in Gaza, including its entities, such as UNRWA.**

The **official told KAN that every UN agency that has entered Gaza has either been a massive failure or has been taken over by Hamas. Therefore, Israel would not permit UNRWA to continue its operations there.**

Israel hopes US 'will see eye to eye'



The **unnamed official added that Israel had informed the United States of its stance on the matter** "in the hope that the Americans will see eye to eye with Israel on this issue.

"Empty UNRWA and World Food Program trucks head to the Kerem Shalom crossing to collect limited humanitarian aid and fuel, in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip, July 24, 2025 (credit: ABED RAHIM KHATIB/FLASH90)"

The ICJ on Wednesday rejected Israel's assertions that a large number of UNRWA employees were members of Hamas.

It was further stated that the UNRWA remains necessary in the region and there is no alternative, even if some of its members have acted against its principles.

Last year, Israel decided to ban UNRWA's activities,

including in Gaza <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-871361>

Shas quits its coalition posts to protest failure to legislate Haredi draft exemption

But ultra-Orthodox party remains in the coalition, pledging to return to its government and Knesset roles 'when the status of yeshiva students is resolved'

By [Sam Sokol](#)

Today, 1:52 pm



Chairman Aryeh Deri attends a meeting of the Shas party Council of Torah Sages in Jerusalem, July 16, 2025. (Flash90)

The ultra-Orthodox Shas party announced on Thursday morning that it will withdraw from all coalition roles it holds in the Knesset, giving up its chairmanships of parliamentary committees to protest the lack of a law regulating the conscription of yeshiva students.

"In accordance with the directive of the Council of Torah Scholars... according to which the government must bring to a vote

the law to regulate the status of yeshiva students no later than the opening of the winter session of the Knesset — which unfortunately has not yet been implemented — Shas announces its withdrawal from its coalition roles in the Knesset," the party said in a statement.

In **accordance with the announcement, Shas MKs Yossi Taib and Yoni Meshriki will give up their positions on the Education and Health committees, while Michael Malkieli will relinquish the chair of the Special Committee for Bridging Social Gaps in the Periphery.**

Despite this, the party is not quitting the coalition and will not topple the government, although the move does put additional pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to pass a military conscription bill, which has been derided by the opposition as the "evasion law."

Some **80,000 ultra-Orthodox men aged between 18 and 24 are currently believed to be eligible for military service, but have not enlisted.** The Israel Defense Forces has said it urgently needs 12,000 recruits due to the strain on standing and reserve forces caused by the war against Hamas in Gaza and other military challenges.

For the past year, the Haredi leadership has pushed to pass a law keeping its constituency out of the IDF, after the High Court ruled that decades-long blanket exemptions from army duty traditionally afforded to full-time Haredi yeshiva students were illegal.



Ultra-Orthodox Jews clash with police during a protest against the conscription of yeshiva students on Route 4 near Bnei Brak, September 11, 2025. (Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

In its statement on Thursday, Shas pledged to “continue to lead the struggle against the political and cruel persecution campaign directed against students of the holy yeshivas, who study Torah day and night for the sake of all Israel and for the success of the soldiers,” adding that “when the status of yeshiva students is resolved, Shas will return to its positions in the government and the Knesset.”

In the meantime, it will “operate in full coordination with the Haredi factions and will continuously consult with the Council of Torah Sages regarding its position on votes in the Knesset plenum,” the statement continued, implying that Shas will continue this summer’s boycott of coalition bills.

Shas [quit the government](#) in July over increased enforcement against draft dodgers as well as the coalition’s failure to pass legislation regulating the status of yeshiva students. Its exit from the government followed that of fellow ultra-Orthodox party United Torah Judaism, which, unlike Shas, also left the coalition.

In a statement at the time, the party’s ruling Council of Torah Sages said that it had instructed the party’s lawmakers to enact a law regulating the military conscription of Haredi young men “as soon as possible and no later than the opening of the Knesset winter session, so that it will be possible to maintain the existence of the government and the coalition partnership.”

However, while recent reports indicated that the party was [eyeing a return](#) to the government, the Knesset reconvened this week without such legislation on the table.

On Tuesday evening, Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee chairman Boaz Bismuth told Channel 14 that a revised draft of the government’s long-delayed bill would be [presented to lawmakers next week](#), with the goal of sending it to the plenum for its final two readings in December.



Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee chairman Boaz Bismuth at a committee meeting at the Knesset in Jerusalem, September 3, 2025. (Sam Sokol/Times of Israel)

The previous day, Bismuth had announced that he was postponing a series of scheduled discussions of the bill because his committee’s legal adviser required additional time to prepare a draft of the legislation based on a document of principles he had submitted last week.

According to Hebrew-language news reports, the document stipulates that within five years, 50 percent of the annual Haredi draft cohort will be conscripted, and the age of exemption will remain at 26. Government funding for yeshivas will only be cut if they fail to meet army enlistment quotas after a year, and sanctions on individuals who do not serve in the army will only go into effect after two years if the overall enlistment goal is not met.

Moreover, those sanctioned will not lose their driver’s licenses, although restrictions on issuing licenses to draft evaders will apply.

In what many see as an attempt to secure support for Bismuth’s bill, and to pave the way for Shas’s return, the Likud party [decided](#) on Wednesday evening to boot former chairman Yuli Edelstein from the committee altogether.

Lawmakers on Wednesday also [voted down](#) a package of bills from opposition MKs that would financially penalize yeshiva students who avoid military service. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/shas-quits-its-coalition-posts-to-protest-failure-to-legislate-haredi-draft-exemption/>

Katz locks horns with IDF chief, again, in apparent bid to reshape military’s top brass
Defense minister has been accused of ‘politicizing’ army by taking control of appointments; Zamir concedes some nominations, is now waiting for approval of next Navy and IAF chiefs

By [Emanuel Fabian](#)

Today, 2:33 pm



Defense Minister Israel Katz (left) and IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir are seen at the Knesset, October 13, 2025. (Israel Defense Forces)

Defense Minister Israel Katz in recent months has been fighting an escalating campaign against the chief of the Israel Defense Forces by selectively promoting officers and denying the appointments of others with whom he apparently does not see eye to eye.

Some military officials have warned that Katz is attempting to “politicize the army” by taking control of senior appointments.

Since entering the role of defense minister in late 2024, Katz has canceled the appointments of several senior officers who had been chosen by IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir and his predecessor, Herzi Halevi.

Some of the promotion hold-ups appear to have a rational justification, while others are puzzling.

Katz **also delayed the promotion of dozens of colonels and brigadier generals for weeks**, claiming that they had been made by Zamir without consultation. And he has yet to rule on the appointment of three major general roles, with the officers currently staffing them nearing the end of their tenures.

Normally, senior appointments, aside from those of top generals, are brought to the defense minister for approval following internal IDF meetings on the matter. Katz has falsely claimed that,

according to the law, he is in charge of the senior promotions in the military.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir holds a situational assessment following the IDF's attack on Houthi leadership and the recovery of two hostages' remains from Gaza, August 29, 2025. (Israel Defense Forces)



There is no such law, but there is a “General Staff order” — a top-tier military protocol — from 1992, updated in 2020, stating that for promotions of colonels and above, the IDF chief of staff is the “appointing authority” and the defense minister is the “approving authority.”

The approving authority is defined in the military protocol as the official authorized to approve the promotion

of an officer after it has been agreed upon in a staffing discussion.

The order also states that “the appointment of officers in the IDF will take place after holding an appointments discussion. The decision in the appointments discussion will be made by the chairperson of the discussion and will be passed on for approval by the approving authority.”

Katz, in August, publicly slammed the military chief for announcing a list of senior appointments, claiming Zamir had done so without consulting him. At the end of the month, the two announced that they had reached an understanding on the army's appointment process.



Defense Minister Israel Katz (left) and IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, June 20, 2025. (Ariel Hermoni/Defense Ministry)

The defense minister has said on multiple occasions that he would not approve the appointments of officers potentially involved in the failures surrounding Hamas's October 7, 2023, onslaught until the IDF completes its internal investigations.

While this standard has been applied to some officers with ostensible ties to the October 7 failures, Katz has had no issue promoting other officers who are equally, if not more, responsible for the failures.

For example, in September Katz approved a list of senior appointments made by Zamir — after a delay of four weeks — except for two names: Brig. Gen. Eliad Moati,

who was set to command the 210th Division, and Brig. Gen. Manor Yanai, who was to become chief of staff of the Ground Forces.

Moati is a former commander of the Border Defense Corps, a unit responsible for the IDF's surveillance soldiers, many of whom were killed and abducted during the Hamas-led October 7, 2023, onslaught that began the war in Gaza.

Seemingly, he has ties to the failures on October 7.



IDF troops walk through Kibbutz Nahal Oz, near the Gaza border, on October 20, 2023, following the October 7 Hamas onslaught. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

Yet Moati only entered the Border Defense Corps chief role a week before the massacre. And since then, during the war, he was appointed to head the Tzeelim training base, a decision that Katz approved.

Similarly, Yanai is chief of staff at the Southern Command, serving in the role since before the October 7, 2023, attack. But his role is largely administrative and focuses on building up forces, not deploying them.

Meanwhile, Katz has approved the promotion of other officers who served in roles that could be considered more

closely linked to the failures of October 7. For example, former Israeli Air Force operations chief Brig. Gen. Gilad Keinan was appointed as the next chief of staff at the IAF, a move approved by Katz.

Katz also reportedly [intervened](#) on behalf of Col. Haim Cohen, the former commander of the Gaza Division's Northern Brigade, who was slated for termination over failures surrounding the Hamas onslaught, after the officer appealed to a Likud-affiliated crime family to prevent his ouster.



Katz has not approved the promotions of other officers with apparent ties to the October 7 failures, including Col. Ephraim Avni, the operations chief at the IDF Southern Command, who was appointed by former IDF chief Halevi to head the Paratroopers Brigade; and Col. Almog Dadon, the head of combat engineering at the Southern Command, who was appointed to head the elite Yahalom combat engineering unit.

Defense Minister Israel Katz (center) speaks with officers, including Southern Command chief Maj. Gen. Yaniv Asor (right) and 36th Division commander Brig. Gen. Moran Omer, in Gaza City, October 8, 2025. (Ariel Hermoni/Defense Ministry)

In recent weeks, the clash between Katz and Zamir has surrounded the defense minister's attempt to promote his military secretary — a move that the IDF chief of staff is against.

Zamir, several weeks ago, selected the next chiefs of the Israeli Navy and IAF, according to military sources. Vice Adm. Eyal Harel, the current head of the Planning Directorate, is set to replace Vice Adm. David Saar Salama,



who has been Navy chief for over four years; and Brig. Gen. Omer Tischler, the IAF's chief of staff, is set to replace Maj. Gen. Tomer Bar as IAF chief after nearly four years in the role.

But Katz has refused to approve the nominations until his own military secretary, Brig. Gen. Guy Markizeno, is promoted to major general.

Defense Minister Israel Katz (left) and his military secretary, Brig. Gen. Guy Markizeno, get off an Israeli Air Force helicopter in the Mount Hermon area in southern Syria, March 11, 2025. (Emanuel Fabian/Times of Israel)

Katz initially sought to nominate Markizeno as the next head of the Coordinator of Government

Activities in the Territories (COGAT) — a Defense Ministry body that is headed by a general and is part of the IDF's General Staff Forum.

Zamir, however, wanted Brig. Gen. Hisham Ibrahim — the current head of COGAT's Civil Administration unit — to be promoted to major general and head COGAT.

Ultimately, in an unusual and unprecedented move, Katz announced that retired senior police officer [Yoram Halevi](#) would head COGAT. Zamir conceded, as Katz had conditioned the approval of the delayed list of appointments on nominating Halevi.

Now, Katz is seeking to nominate Markizeno as the next defense attaché to the United States — a major general role but not part of the IDF General Staff. (The current defense attaché to the US, Maj. Gen. Hidai Zilberman, who has served in the role since 2021, has been appointed as the next Planning Directorate chief, replacing Harel.)

Zamir, however, does not believe Markizeno to be a good fit for the role and is considering naming other candidates, though the IDF chief may again concede to Katz to get his Navy and IAF nominations through.



L-R: Planning Directorate chief Vice Adm. Eyal Harel, IAF chief Maj. Gen. Tomer Bar, Operations Directorate chief Maj. Gen. Oded Basiuk, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, Intelligence Directorate chief Maj. Gen. Shlomi Binder, and Operations Division chief Brig. Gen. Yisrael Shomer, at the IDF's underground command center, early June 22, 2025. (Israel Defense Forces)

The efforts by Katz to promote officers considered close to him, or the unprecedented move of giving a retired police officer the rank of major general — despite the objections of the IDF chief — appear to some military officials as reminiscent of National Security Minister [Itamar Ben Gvir's politicization of the police](#) by selectively promoting officers who push his far-right agenda.

In August, Army Radio cited military officials as saying that if a commander “knows the defense minister or [the right-leaning] Channel 14 are the ones who appointed him, what is he supposed to think?”

“Appointment of officers by the minister could turn the IDF into the police,” the officials said, referring to Ben Gvir's alleged intervention in the force.

But Katz isn't just selectively promoting officers; some military officials said he has been purposefully seeking to tussle with the IDF chief. Over the round of appointments in August, Katz issued [several statements](#) to the media against Zamir.

It was not the first time that Katz [publicly clashed](#) with the IDF chief. The defense minister also [repeatedly](#) publicly [clashed](#) with Zamir's predecessor Halevi, as well as other senior officers, including former IDF spokesman Rear Adm. [Daniel Hagari](#) and current Intelligence Directorate chief Maj. Gen. [Shlomi Binder](#).

Ultimately, those suffering the results of Katz's latest clash with Zamir over the appointments are the senior IDF officers whose future in the military is now hazy, like Moati and Yanai. “The minister decided to punish officers who are not guilty of anything, without reasoning and without consistent criteria,” a military official was cited by Ynet news as saying this month.

“Instead of creating stability for the system, the minister creates chaos and tries to educate the chief of staff,” another senior officer told the news site.

It remains unclear whether Zamir will be able to withstand the pressure and appoint the officers he sees as most appropriate for the roles, or if he will keep caving to Katz's demands. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/katz-locks-horns-with-idf-chief-in-apparent-effort-to-reshape-militarys-top-brass/> **Infighting will destroy the IDF if they aren't careful. rdb**

IDF trains for October 7-style Hezbollah attack from Lebanon in major northern border drill

Forces dealt with simulated attempted takeovers of additional northern communities, IDF facilities, and outposts along the border.



IDF troops operate in southern Lebanon. January 23, 2025. (photo credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT)

The IDF conducted 30 hours of training for defensive battles across the entire northern border in the past week in preparation for a potential October 7-like attack from Lebanon.

One of the scenarios presented during the training tested the army's ability to respond to a surprise attack on Nahariya, a major urban center with tens of thousands of residents, if hundreds of terrorists attempted to infiltrate by air, land, and sea to capture the city.

Simultaneously, forces dealt with simulated attempted takeovers of additional northern communities, IDF facilities, and outposts along the border.

On Wednesday night, the exercise entered its second phase, as the IDF shifted from defense to offense inside Lebanese territory.

During the night, troops were required to train for scenarios involving the prevention of hostages being smuggled from Israeli territory into Lebanon.



IDF troops operate in southern Lebanon. January 23, 2025. (credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT)

The army said it made no "concessions" for the participating forces, with the Ground Training Center designing extreme scenarios meant to push troops to their limits.

Exercises exposed areas of weakness

Among those taking part, there was a consensus that in some areas the exercise revealed failures. "There were places where battalions failed their missions severely," a senior officer said, noting that units sometimes had to be replaced mid-drill or recover from major setbacks. The officer said massive coordination with the Israel Air Force was practiced, alongside smaller- and

larger-scale engagements in various locations. **According to the IDF, the question remains as to whether Hezbollah can still challenge Israel in an extreme scenario. "At this point, can they execute something like what we practiced as they could before? Probably not," the senior officer said.** "But our starting point is to prepare for both the easy and the hardest possibilities. We can't know what will happen." He added that many operational patterns were drilled, and credited the training center for pushing forces "from the plausible to the implausible" across air, land, and sea domains. The IDF acknowledged that any Hezbollah attack may come as a surprise. "The assumption is that it will happen unexpectedly – not because I don't trust intelligence, but because intelligence can't know everything," the officer said. "That's why all the scenarios were surprise attacks – to connect the dots into a complete picture." He noted that Hezbollah's capabilities had been badly damaged but that "they are trying. Their [numbers] and coordination are now very limited." Organizers built scenarios based on Hezbollah's pre-war abilities, even exaggerating its strength to test readiness.

"They came from the sea, from many directions, not just above the water," the officer said. "At sea, the navy's job is to stop them. On land, our continuous operations inside Lebanon give us two advantages – short-term scanning to ensure Hezbollah doesn't rebuild, and long-term organization of the security buffer to make it harder for them to launch attacks."

One of the commanders overseeing the exercise said the extreme scenarios were intentionally designed to overload the system.

"But **there was no system collapse**," he said. "We have no choice but to learn from the failures of [October 7](#). The system functions differently now. Even under pressure, they recovered."

Northern Command officials said that since October 7, the IDF has dramatically changed its approach to securing the northern sector.

The **army has deployed five forward outposts inside southern Lebanon**, overlooking the terrain in

front of Galilee communities, serving as a forward defense line. Each community now has an upgraded local emergency squad reinforced with manpower and equipment, plus an attached infantry platoon. At the same time, the IDF has enhanced its firepower and lethality and created specialized battalions and rapid-response units designed to provide immediate defensive response. When asked what worries him most, the senior officer replied, "It's mainly what I don't know, [both the] when and where. I try to assess the patterns and push the drills to the edge as much as possible." <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-871380>

IDF foils weapon smuggling attempt between Syria and Lebanon in Hermon region

After identifying suspicious movement in the Hermon Summit region during an overnight IDF activity happening alongside the elite unit 504, multiple suspects were arrested.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) OCTOBER 23, 2025 19:24



IDF soldiers operating in Syria (photo credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON UNIT)

The IDF apprehended several suspects attempting to smuggle weapons from Syria to Lebanon overnight, the military confirmed on Thursday.

After identifying suspicious movement in the Hermon mountain area during an overnight IDF activity happening alongside the elite unit 504, multiple suspects were arrested.

The suspects were transferred for further questioning, and the weapons were confiscated.

Smuggled weapons confiscated by the IDF in Syria, October 23, 2025. (credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT)



IDF arrests additional weapons smugglers

On Saturday, the IDF arrested additional suspects attempting to smuggle weapons in the same area.

The suspects tried to smuggle grenades, guns, anti-tank rockets, and ammunition. They were taken to questioning, and the weapons were confiscated.

This comes after residents of the North reported a weakening of deterrence in recent days, after Lebanese individuals, allegedly civilians, were seen approaching up to 80 meters from the border with Israel.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-871441>



Pro-Palestine students disrupt the lecture of Michael Ben-Gad, an ex-IDF soldier and lecturer at City University.

Israeli professor in London says masked students threatened to behead him

Anti-Israel activists seek the dismissal of economics professor Michael Ben-Gad, who says they called him a 'war criminal' and 'Nazi'

By [Zev Stub](#)

Today, 1:20 pm

Anti-Israel students disrupt the lecture of professor Michael Ben-Gad at City University in London, October 22, 2025. (Press TV via X)

Masked demonstrators stormed the classroom of an Israeli-born economics professor at City University of London Wednesday.

The professor, Michael Ben-Gad, said they threatened to behead him and shouting accusations that he was a "war criminal" and a "Nazi."

“They came right up to me and screamed in my face,” Ben-Gad told Sky News. “One of them made a threat about having my head chopped off.”

Video footage shared on social media showed masked protesters taking over the classroom and yelling that Ben-Gad “is part of the genocide in Gaza.”

The video shows a handful of enraged masked students charging that Ben-Gad served in the “IOF” — an acronym for Israeli Occupation Forces, a term used by some anti-Israel activists to refer to the IDF — and chanting pro-Palestine slogans as security personnel attempted to guide them out of the room.

Ben-Gad, who served in the IDF in the 1980s and has ties to Israeli universities and the Bank of Israel, said he has been targeted by an anti-Israel group called City Action for Palestine demanding his dismissal.

A week earlier, the group had distributed flyers around campus branding Ben-Gad a “terrorist” and calling for his dismissal because his compulsory army service, from 1982 to 1985, coincided with the Sabra and Shatila massacre in Beirut during the Lebanese Civil War.

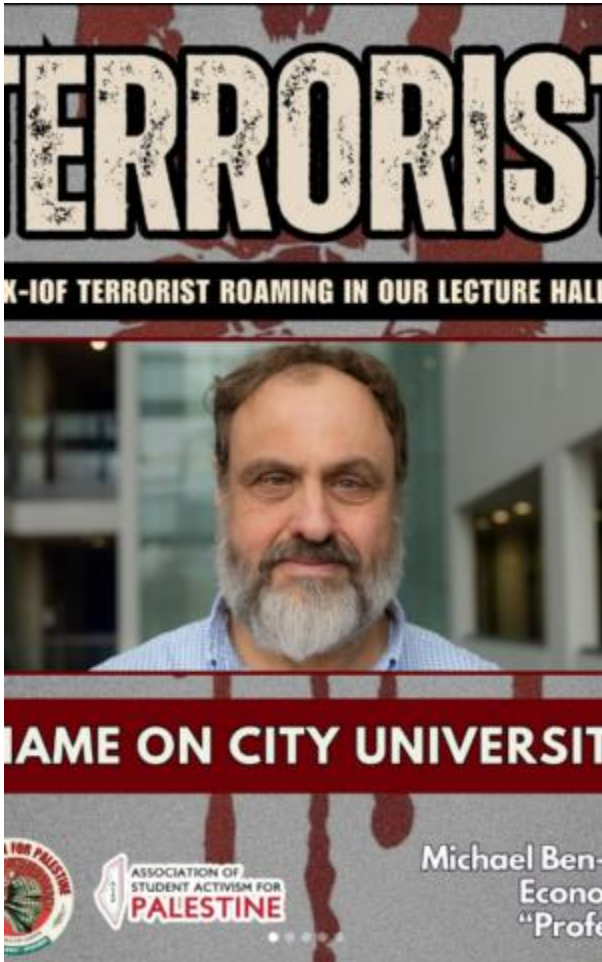
Pro-Palestine students disrupt the lecture of Michael Ben-Gad, an ex-Israeli soldier and current lecturer at City University in London.

Follow Press TV on Telegram: <https://t.co/LWoNSpkJSh> pic.twitter.com/B5whXdY0D6

— Press TV ???? (@PressTV) [October 22, 2025](#)

Ben-Gad responded that his “only crime” was being a Jew who has lived in the Middle East.

“If the objective of the demonstration was to frighten or intimidate me, frankly they will have to try a lot harder than printing up a flyer, launching an Instagram campaign or a small demonstration,” Ben-Gad [told](#) the Daily Mail.



A flyer calling for Professor Michael Ben-Gad's dismissal from City University of London (Screenshot used in accordance with Clause 27a of the Copyright Law)

“I lectured this week as usual while all this was beginning, and plan to do so next week as well,” he said. “I am indeed, as they claim, an IDF veteran, and I plan to act like one — these modern brownshirts are not going to send me into hiding.”

Following the incident, the university said that Ben-Gad, who has worked at City University of London since 2008 and served as the head of the economics department for three years, has the full support of the university and its senior management team.

“City St George’s fully supports and upholds freedom of expression within the law and is willing to engage in lawful discussion and debate across the full range of topics,” a spokesperson said. “However, unlawful and repugnant attempts to obstruct and interfere with our academic operations are another thing entirely, and the University will not tolerate the harassment of its staff and students.

“We reject the unlawful actions of this small group of individuals that is neither affiliated with the University nor its Students’ Union,” the statement continued. “We will continue to support and protect our staff and students, including Michael, who has the full support of the University and its senior management team, as well as colleagues of all faiths and backgrounds.”

Incredible watching Professor Michael Ben-Gad keep his sense of humour in all this. What a hero ❤️

pic.twitter.com/1qMuw9PoIG

— M B Levin???? (@M_B_Levin) [October 22, 2025](#)

More than a thousand UK academics signed a petition standing against the attacks on Ben-Gad.

“Regardless of diverse views on the recent Gaza war and the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we deplore any campaign that seeks to intimidate and drive out lecturers because they are

Israeli, Jewish, or members of any other group,” the [petition](#) read. “We are immensely grateful to hear of the strong support given by the President and Senior Leadership Team to the Professor in question, and we wish to register our equal support.”

Antisemitism has soared in the UK since the start of the conflict. More than 1,500 antisemitic incidents were recorded across the country in the first half of 2025, the second-highest total ever, the Community Security Trust, which provides security to Jewish organizations across the country, [said](#) in August. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-professor-in-london-says-masked-students-threatened-to-behead-him/>
The should deport the terrorists immediately with no judicial recourse. rdb

How Iran is rebuilding its nuclear program, learning from Israeli strikes - analysis

The Mossad’s efforts to keep surveillance of Tehran’s nuclear facilities and, if necessary, act against them, may become more crucial than ever.



By [YONAH JEREMY BOB](#) OCTOBER 23, 2025 19:00 Updated: OCTOBER 23, 2025 19:36

A billboard with Iranian centrifuges illustrations and portraits of nuclear scientists killed in Israeli strikes is displayed on a street in Tehran, Iran August 29, 2025(photo credit: MAJID ASGARIPOUR/WANA (WEST ASIA NEWS AGENCY) VIA REUTERS)

Since the Israeli Air Force struck Iran’s nuclear facility at Taleghah 2 last October, there have been at least four developments in construction at the site.

An Institute for Science and International Security report, published on Monday by its president, David Albright, and other institute members, provides a detailed analysis of satellite imagery across these four stages.

While this site is only one of many of interest to Israel and the West regarding Iranian attempts to rebuild its nuclear program, it serves as a useful test case and view into Tehran’s broader efforts.

The larger picture

Stepping back for the larger picture, it is important to recall that **the IAF hit about 20 targets in Iran last October, more than seven months before its more dramatic strike of at least 1,000 targets in June.**

The main goal of **last October’s strike was to eliminate all of Iran’s advanced and Russian-made S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems.**



A satellite view shows an overview of Fordow underground complex, after the U.S. struck the underground nuclear facility, near Qom, Iran June 22, 2025. (credit: Maxar Technologies/Handout via REUTERS ATTENTION EDITORS)

Once that was accomplished, it cleared the way for Israel’s much more ambitious attack in June, which is believed to have set back Tehran’s nuclear program by about two years.

While the primary focus of the October 2024 airstrikes was the S-300 anti-aircraft systems, Israel also struck several Iranian nuclear and ballistic-missile facilities.

Already by mid-May of this year, Albright’s report documents that Iran had built a black temporary cover over the previously struck site and had started to rebuild some aspects of it.

By June 12, just before the most recent Israeli attack, imagery showed that Iran was laying the foundations in front of the black cover.

Those were the two construction moves Iran had already made before the June airstrikes.

By **August 30, a new large arch-roofed structure was under construction, and two smaller arch-roofed structures were also being built above the foundation previously laid on either side and in front of the larger structure.**

Furthermore, by September **27, satellite photos showed that a third arched structure had been added**, and that other arched structures were making modest progress.

Possibly more importantly, the layout of the two previously observed smaller side buildings appeared to be designed in a manner that **if they were bunkered over with earth**, they could each include a blast mitigation feature referred to as a “blast trap.”

Albright’s report also said there was a new support facility about 200 meters away from the main rebuilding project.

Rebuilding post June airstrikes

These **were the two moves that Iran made regarding rebuilding the facility since the June airstrikes.**

The institute's report said it could not conclusively determine what Tehran is building in the area, and that it was still even possible that the new structures are not connected to the nuclear program.

Nevertheless, **Albright also wrote: “It is deeply concerning that construction is occurring at a former AMAD plan nuclear weapons site, raising considerable questions as to the true purpose of the facilities there.”**

He warned that the West, Israel, or the [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#) should make efforts to discern **if these are attempts by Iran to “reconstitute either the nuclear weapons related high explosive test chamber facilities that were originally part of the AMAD program**, or the more recently reported PETN plastic explosive manufacturing capability that would have been a key part of Iran’s nuclear weapons efforts.”

Furthermore, the institute said if the **new facilities are covered up with earth to bunker them**, they might be much more difficult to destroy by Israeli airstrikes.

While nothing in Albright’s report is conclusive, in the worst-case scenario, what has happened is that Tehran learned from the October 2024 Israeli attacks what the IAF’s capabilities are for destroying its facilities and also likely some of the limits for strikes from the air.

In that sense, the construction developments in May and June were likely Iranian advances to insulate the newly rebuilt nuclear site from Israeli airstrikes.

If the June strikes had led Tehran to doubt the viability of its rebuilding project at this prior nuclear site, it would probably have halted construction and pivoted to another site.

That it continued and even expanded construction at the site – not only after the October 2024 strikes, but also after the June strikes – suggests that the **ayatollahs believe they have found a new formula to insulate from future Israeli attacks some facilities that are being built** anew.

Many of the descriptions in the report suggest that Iran is **using a strategy of moving more of its nuclear facilities underground, together with various other measures, to limit the effectiveness of future potential IAF airstrikes.**

Although both the October 2024 and June airstrikes against Iran were extremely successful, the open-source record is clear that the IAF had to strike certain nuclear sites several times.

Sometimes this may have been to destroy different facilities spread out within the same nuclear site that had not been previously targeted.

But **some of the cases were definitely because an earlier strike had failed to sufficiently harm the nuclear facility in question.**

Likewise, we know that Israel in June requested and received help from the US to strike the completely deep underground Fordow nuclear facility and also the portions of the Isfahan nuclear facility that were underground.

Israel’s requests to the US for help to strike multiple nuclear facilities make it even clearer that some of Iran’s tactics to insulate its nuclear facilities – by building them underground or with mitigating measures to reduce the blast and shock waves from airstrikes – are working.

They also leave Israel with some limited options when: Iran has banned virtually all IAEA inspections, the 2015 nuclear deal has been vitiated by all parties, and no nuclear negotiations are taking place between Iran and the West.

An illustration of sanctions being placed on Iran's nuclear program. (credit: Mr Changezi/Shutterstock)



Global sanctions

The most powerful diplomatic and economic weapon against Iran, the “snapback” of global sanctions, was activated by the UK, France, and Germany (the E-3) almost a month ago, and yet there is no sense that Tehran is any closer to returning to talks.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei sounded as deep in denial as ever this week about the impact of the June airstrikes by Israel when he said the Trump administration was “dreaming” that it had destroyed Iran’s nuclear program.

Khamenei was right that US President Donald Trump’s comment about obliterating the whole program was an exaggeration, but to act as if the program did not receive a body blow, which has delayed any chance at building a nuclear program for at least two years, signals that Iran’s leader is himself dreaming.

To **be clear, the concerns about a reconstituted Iranian nuclear program are not short- or medium-term worries.**

In four months since the June strikes, Iran has failed to show a single sign of its nuclear program continuing to have a substantial heartbeat, including not showing a single functioning centrifuge to enrich uranium from a prewar uranium centrifuge fleet of around 20,000.

The **concerns are about Iran reconstituting its nuclear threat over the long term, i.e., beyond two years.**

If it uses disciplined patience to move all or virtually all of its nuclear facilities deeper underground and weaves in new defenses to mitigate the impact of airstrikes, will Israel be in a position that it would need US help to strike any Iranian nuclear facility, and not just the two hardest targets at Fordow and Isfahan?

And what if Iran hits a critical point in its nuclear program at some later date in the Trump administration, i.e., when Trump is no longer willing to use American military power as much? Or if Khamenei waits for the next US president, who may be much more hesitant to order high-stakes American airstrikes with mega-bunker buster bombs?

The Mossad discovered Iran’s secret AMAD nuclear-weapons program, and the full map of Iran’s nuclear sites used for airstrikes last October and this June was found by the Israeli spy agency during a raid of Tehran’s nuclear archives in 2018.

If Iran keeps the IAEA out of the country and rejects diplomacy even as it faces global sanctions, then the Mossad’s future efforts to keep surveillance of Tehran’s nuclear facilities and, if necessary, act against them will become more crucial than ever. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/article-871440> **What about the multiple transport flights that have gone into Iran from Russia and China? Don’t you anticipate that they might be helping them rearm their weapons? Another issue is did all of their stored nuclear material actually get destroyed in the June attack. The US authorities say yes but can you really trust what they say? I don’t think so. If a politician’s mouth is moving they are usually telling a lie. rdb**

Hundreds of US rabbis call on Americans to back pro-Israel candidates

More than 600 American rabbis signed a letter urging voters to support candidates who reject antisemitism and anti-Zionism and affirm Israel’s right to exist in peace and security.

By [MICHAEL STARRO](#) OCTOBER 22, 2025 21:18 Updated: OCTOBER 22, 2025 21:40



Democratic mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani speaks during a Democratic mayoral primary debate, Wednesday, June 4, 2025, in New York. (photo credit: YUKI IWAMURA/REUTERS)

Over 600 American rabbis called for their countrymen to support political candidates who affirm Israel’s right to exist and reject antisemitism and antizionism, according to an open letter issued by The Jewish Majority on Wednesday.

“We will not accept a culture that treats Jewish self-determination as a negotiable ideal or Jewish inclusion as something to be ‘granted.’ The safety and dignity of Jews in every city depend on rejecting that false choice,” read the statement. “Therefore, we call on all Americans who value peace and equality to participate fully in the democratic process in order to stand up for candidates who reject antisemitic and [anti-Zionist](#) rhetoric, and who affirm Israel’s right to exist in peace and security.”

The **645 rabbis who signed the call to action, by the time of writing, had made the statement in response to the rise and normalization of political anti-Zionism across the country**, including the campaign of New York City mayoral candidate [Zohran Mamdani](#).

JPost Videos

The **statement noted that Mamdani had refused to condemn slogans such as "globalize the intifada," had denied Israel's legitimacy as a Jewish state, and accused the country of engaging in Genocide.**

The **statement quoted the signatory and the NY Board of Rabbis president, Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, in a video statement to the candidate last Thursday, in which he urged him to reconsider positions that delegitimize the Jewish community and encouraged and exacerbated "hostility towards Judaism and Jews."**



Democratic candidate Zohran Mamdani prepares in the green room before participating in a mayoral debate, in New York, US October 16, 2025. (credit: Angelina Katsanis/Pool via REUTERS)

A call to vote against Mamdani

The **statement also cited Park Avenue Synagogue Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove, who explained in a Saturday sermon calling on community members to vote against Mamdani that Zionism, Israel, and Jewish self-determination were an inextricable part of Jewish identity for many Jews.** Cosgrove had not signed the statement by Wednesday.

The **hundreds of rabbis also called on other religious and communal partners to stand with the Jewish community in rejecting dangerous rhetoric.**

"Now is the time for everyone to unite across political and moral divides, and to reject the language that seeks to delegitimize our Jewish identity and our community," said the rabbis. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-871334>

Russia's response to Tomahawk strikes would be 'overwhelming' – Putin

Supplying Kiev with the long-range missiles would be an "escalation attempt," the Russian president has said

23 Oct, 2025 16:27



Russian President Vladimir Putin. © Sputnik / Kristina Kormilitsyna

Russia's response to a Ukrainian strike using US-made Tomahawk missiles would be "very serious, if not... overwhelming," President Vladimir Putin told journalists on Thursday. Supplying Kiev with such long-range weapons would be "an escalation attempt," he warned.

Kiev has repeatedly requested Tomahawk missiles. Ukraine's Vladimir Zelensky raised the issue during a meeting with US President

Donald Trump at the White House last week. According to Axios, Zelensky failed to secure deliveries of the weapon. US officials had previously said that the option might be on the table, adding that Trump would make the ultimate decision.

Speaking during a meeting with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte at the White House on Wednesday, the president did not say whether the US might eventually provide Kiev with the missiles but stated that operating them required long and intensive training. The missiles have a maximum range of around 2,500km (1,550 miles).

"This would be an escalation. It is an escalation attempt," Putin said, commenting on a potential delivery. "If Russian territory is hit... with such a weapon, the response will be very serious if not outright overwhelming," the president added, encouraging Western leaders "to think about it."

Moscow has previously warned that although Tomahawk deliveries would not affect the state of the battlefield of the Ukraine conflict, they would diminish peace prospects and strike a blow to US-Russian relations.

Putin discussed the issue with Trump during a phone call last week. Delivering the missiles would "severely undermine the prospects of a peaceful settlement," he said at the time. Following the call, Trump said it would be "not easy" for the US to provide Kiev with Tomahawks and maintained that Washington should not deplete its own arsenal for Ukraine. <https://www.rt.com/russia/626882-russia-overwhelming-response-tomahawk/>

Belgium resists EU pressure to use Russian assets to fund Kiev

Prime Minister Bart De Wever insists that all members of the bloc must share the financial risks of the proposed “reparation loan”

23 Oct, 2025 09:07



Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever, Berlin, Germany, August 26, 2025. © Andreas Gora - Pool / Getty Images

Belgium will not back the European Union’s plan to use frozen Russian sovereign assets as collateral for a massive loan to Ukraine unless the financial risks are shared across all member states, Prime Minister Bart De Wever has said.

Speaking ahead of Thursday's EU leaders' summit in Brussels, De Wever reaffirmed his government's opposition to the plan, vowing to “do everything in my power” to block it unless guarantees of collective risk-sharing are provided.

The European Commission is promoting a scheme to raise around €140 billion (\$160 billion) for Kiev, arguing that the money could later be recovered from Moscow as “reparations.” Belgium holds the largest portion of the funds through the Brussels-based Euroclear clearinghouse. Russia has denounced any use of its immobilized assets as outright theft.

Touching sovereign assets is “something that’s never been done before – not even during World War II,” the prime minister told reporters. If the pro-Kiev “coalition of the willing” is not ready to bear the risks, there’s “no point in continuing,” he added.

“We know there are vast amounts of Russian money in other countries that remain silent on this,” De Wever stated. “If we move, we must move all together. That’s European solidarity.”

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has likewise cautioned that the EU must avoid undermining “the financial and monetary stability of our economies and the euro area” when considering any steps involving the assets.

Russian President Vladimir Putin previously asserted that “smarter” European governments understand the danger the proposed loan to Ukraine poses to the stability of the global financial system

<https://www.rt.com/news/626855-belgium-resists-reparations-loan/>

OP ED

Mamdani’s Terror Mosque Called for Taking Over America

Wed, 22 Oct 2025 4:43 PM PST by Daniel Greenfield



After Zohran Mamdani castigated Cuomo for not visiting a mosque, he showed him how it was done by visiting the Al-Taqwa Mosque and posing smilingly with its Jihadist Imam Siraj Wahhaj.

Mamdani, running to be the city’s first Muslim mayor, had already visited a great many mosques, some, like the Islamic Society of Bay Ridge, already notorious for its support for Hamas and cursing Christians and Jews, but had saved the worst mosque for last.

The progressive candidate openly embraced an imam who not only supported terrorism, but had called for the full application of Islamic Sharia law “If Allah says cut off their hand, you cut off their hand. If Allah says stone them to death” and the execution of gay people “kill them both” at a mosque whose spokesman had denounced women who wear perfume as “deviant”.

Mamdani was betting that the media would keep quiet or play defense for his campaign and he was right. The New York **Times swiftly accused Cuomo of ‘Islamophobia’** and defended Wahhaj, claiming that the imam had told followers not to personally go out and kill gay people.

Seven years ago, the **New York Times had cautiously noted that Wahhaj “has for decades been the imam of Masjid at-Taqwa, which several people connected to the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center** either attended or visited around the time of the attack.” Now it’s a campaign stop.

Long before the Mamdani photo op, the Al-Taqwa Mosque had been a known intersection for Islamic

terrorists including the Blind Sheikh at the center of the World Trade Center bombing and Farooque Ahmed who tried to help Al Qaeda blow up the D.C. Metro.

Mamdani, who had pledged to defund the NYPD, spoke at the **mosque which had been under NYPD surveillance because, in the words of a legal filing by New York City, the mosque's Imam was "named as an unindicted co-conspirator in a plot to bomb a number of New York City landmarks", "illegal weapons trafficking by members of the mosque's security team"** and that "the assistant Imam had earmarked portions of over \$200,000 raised in the mosque to... terrorist organizations."

But what was grounds for NYPD surveillance a decade ago was the scene of a political rally by Mamdani complete [with chants](#) of "Allahu Akbar" **as Mamdani doubled down on his support for Islamic terrorism**. Then Mamdani posed for a grinning photo with Imam Siraj Wahhaj.

Imam Siraj Wahhaj had previously endorsed Mamdani and donated to his campaign, but now the mayoral candidate had decided to publicly embrace an imam who had championed the most brutal forms of Islamic sharia law, endorsed terrorism and called for a takeover of America.

"If you get involved in politics, you have to be very careful that your leader is for Allah. You don't get involved in politics because it's the American thing to do," Imam Wahhaj had preached. "You get involved in politics because politics are a weapon to use in the cause of Islam."

"Wherever you came from, you came to America. And you came for one reason—for one reason only—to establish Allah's deen," Wahhaj had told Muslims and predicted that, "democracy will crumble, and there will be nothing, and the only thing that will remain will be Islam."

"If 6-8 million Muslims unite in America, the country will come to us," he predicted.

Mamdani's mayoral campaign is in many ways the fulfillment of Wahhaj's vision of an Islamic takeover. And the connection between Mamdani and Wahhaj goes deeper than one event.

Before Mamdani carpetbagged his way to Queens to displace a local councilwoman in a district being settled by fellow Pakistani and Bangladeshi 'Indian' Muslims, he got his start in politics as a board member of the Muslim Democratic Club of New York (MDCNY). MDCNY had been co-founded by [Linda Sarsour](#), who [recently bragged](#), "I would be honored to die a martyr", and [who had](#) described Wahhaj as her "a mentor" and "my favorite person in the room."

When Mamdani became a board member at MDCNY, he joined a board that included not only Sarsour, but her close friend, Faiza Ali, the former 'Community Affairs Director' for CAIR, which recently came out in defense of Wahhaj, and which has endorsed the Hamas attacks of Oct 7, Debbie Almontaser, whose "Intifada NYC" ended her previous effort to create a Muslim public school and Aliya Latif, whose brother Imam Khalid Latif had hailed Wahhaj as his hero.

Imam Khalid Latif and Sarsour recently fronted an MDCNY event at the 'Middle Church' on championing Mamdani's campaign. But Imam Latif's biggest moment in the spotlight came after the Islamic terrorist attack at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando when it turned out that the killer had joined a trip led by Latif to Mecca after which the future shooter was flagged by the FBI.

Key MDCNY figures had backed the lawsuits against the NYPD that had dismantled its ability to monitor Islamic terror mosques like Al-Taqwa and paved the way for future terrorist attacks.

But, as Siraj Wahhaj had preached, "I will never ever tell people, 'don't be violent, that is not the Islamic way.' The violence has to be selected." The selected violence over the years had included members of the Al-Taqwa mosque's security team styling themselves "Jihad warriors" and "Jihad assassins". One of those participants, Farooque Ahmed, was sentenced to 23 years in prison for plotting an attack on a rail station in Arlington, Virginia, when he scouted the area and then handed over his findings to what he believed was an Al-Qaeda terrorist, advising him to plant the bombs during the commute to maximize casualties.

More recently, Wahhaj's son and family members were busted running a terrorist training camp for kids in New Mexico. The targets were to be "military, law enforcement, and financial institutions." But violence has always surrounded Wahhaj without ever denting his influence.

Two years before the World Trade Center bombing, Rep. Nick Rahall made Imam Wahhaj the first Muslim to recite a prayer in Congress. Wahhaj had invited the Blind Sheikh, at the center of the terror plots in the city to speak at his mosque and defended him in court.

Then, two years after 9/11, the Brooklyn borough president created Imam Siraj Wahhaj Day.

Mamdani's deliberate normalization of Wahhaj was part of an ongoing project by the Islamist groups like MDCNY and CAIR to not just normalize the man, but what he really stands for.

"If only Muslims were clever politically, they could take over the United States and replace its constitutional government with a caliphate," Wahhaj had advised and Mamdani is clever.

"I pray one day, Inshallah, Allah will bless us to raise an army and I'm serious about this. We were very close, recently. We had made intention to raise an army of 10,000 men in NY City. Muslim men to go fight...And the day is going to come, when that happens," he preached.

That day is now here.

***Daniel Greenfield** is a **Shillman Journalism Fellow** at the **David Horowitz Freedom Center**. This article previously appeared at the Center's **Front Page Magazine**.*

<https://bkdvk-zgpvh.campaign-view.com/ua/viewinbrowser>

Wake up America, there is a planned invasion and take over of the US just like the EU rdb



BS"D

STEP BY STEP

STEP BY STEP: Good news is that many friends and supporters of Lev U'Neshama (Heart and Soul) donated towards the Education Fund project to provide basic school supplies for actually 350 children within our Lev U'Neshama families.

We are grateful that the school supply part of our effort has been successful.

According to the Israel Population and Statistics office, Tzfat's population is about 40,000, and one third live at the poverty level. We do what we can so at least the children within our struggling LUN families can get the things they need.

Every week we are providing new sport shoes and eye exams/eyeglasses to the children on our request list. However, previous donations are rapidly dwindling. I am reaching out now before the fund has been emptied and we will have to say "no" to additional requests.

We work with two local shoe merchants who give Lev U'Neshama a discount but they advised us the cost of the shoes has increased. Also, we work with an accredited optician in town who also gives us a discount but his cost is stable.

Lev U'Neshama is an Israeli registered non-profit charity organization, volunteer run, no business expenses whatsoever and every \$ goes into our programs.

Shoes: \$45 per pair regular and \$60 for First Steps, baby shoes.

Eye Exam/Eyeglasses: \$60 per child.

Your support is urgently requested.

You can send donations to:

East Texas Biblical Prophecy Forum which is a 501-3C ministry and receive a tax credit statement

Or use the Zelle US to US bank transfer system (contact me at mortsmo@aol.com for bank information.

US Donors may also send checks made payable to Simcha Smolensky, my son, who is also a volunteer.

Send to:

Rabbi Simcha Smolensky, 6739 N Mozart St Chicago IL 60645

Your support will be appreciated.

Yaffa Smolensky, Volunteer Program Manager