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06.05.21

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06.05.21

G-7 countries reach agreement on 15 percent minimum global tax rate

The accord announced by finance ministers could reshape tax obligations of multinational corporations

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) headquarters in Paris. The Biden administration is pushing for agreement on a global minimum tax. The proposal from President Biden and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen calls for at least a 15 percent rate to deter companies from using legal and accounting techniques to shift profits to low-tax countries. (AP Photo/Francois Mori, File)
By Jeff Stein June 5, 2021 at 9:21 a.m. CDT

Finance ministers for the G-7 advanced economies announced an accord that could reshape the tax obligations of multinational corporations around the world.

The deal reached at the G-7 meeting Saturday by Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. is a major breakthrough for the Biden administration's efforts to enact a floor on the taxes paid by corporations worldwide.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has been adamant that the U.S. needs to work with international counterparts to prevent nations from being played off each other by firms seeking lower tax obligations.

Yellen pushes global minimum tax as White House eyes new spending plan

“The G-7 Finance Ministers have made a significant, unprecedented commitment today that provides tremendous momentum toward achieving a robust global minimum tax at a rate of at least 15 percent,” Yellen, who led negotiations on behalf of the U.S., said in a statement. “That global minimum tax would end the race-to-the-bottom in corporate taxation, and ensure fairness for the middle class and working people in the U.S. and around the world.”

Under the deal, the U.S. is expected to give up some taxing rights on overseas profits of U.S.-based tech giants.

The deal enables countries to tax 20 percent of the profits of “the largest and most profitable multinational enterprises” that have profit margins of at least 10 percent.

While the agreement does not explicitly name the tech companies, the line is a nod to the push by European countries to levy taxes on the operations in their countries by firms such as Apple and Amazon, which are headquartered in the U.S. but reap significant revenue abroad.

The Europeans insist that it is unfair for the Internet behemoths to collect revenue in their countries without paying more in taxes.

The Biden administration is seeking to raise the domestic corporate tax rate from 21 percent to 28 percent to pay for its spending priorities, such as infrastructure and education.

Republican critics have charged that the move would lead American firms to relocate abroad, hurting domestic jobs and investment. The international tax agreement helps the White House argue that it can lift domestic tax rates without pushing multinationals abroad, because under the agreement they would still face a minimum level of taxation.

Republican lawmakers have been skeptical about granting European countries additional taxing rights over the tech giants. The debate between Europe and the U.S. over taxing digital firms led to several major trade clashes under the Trump administration, with America imposing retaliatory tariffs over European attempts to tax the tech firms.

But the U.S. changed course after last year's presidential election, with Yellen telling the Group of 20 nations in February that the U.S. has dropped demands to allow firms to opt out of new global digital taxes. That helped pave the way toward Saturday's deal.

The deal starts what is expected to be a long and arduous process toward changing international tax laws. Negotiators hope to advance progress toward a binding agreement at a meeting of leaders of the "Group of 20" in Italy in July — but there are a number of sticking points. The deal faces opposition from countries, including Ireland, which rely on revenue by acting as tax havens, and the new U.S. tax rules have to be approved by Congress.

International treaties require passage by a two-thirds majority in the Senate, meaning GOP votes will be necessary to ratify many of the changes pushed by the Biden administration. Republicans have criticized the Biden effort, with Sen. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), the top Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, warning that the U.S. "should not be willing to accept an agreement that continues to target American companies."

"Republicans are unlikely to go along with this — you're ceding tax authority and doing so in a way that disproportionately hurts U.S. companies," said Donald Schneider, who served as chief economist to Republicans on the House Ways and Means Committee.

Biden set for G-7 boost in bid for all nations to impose minimum global corporate tax

It is unclear how much support the new tax floor has in parts of the European Union and other low tax countries. Irish finance minister Paschal Donohoe has said he has "significant reservations" about the U.S. plan and said the country will maintain its 12.5 percent corporate tax rates for years to come.

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The Biden administration initially floated a 21 percent global minimum tax but that rate was eventually lowered to 15 percent. The lower rate will make it easier for countries to join the accord but may reduce its effectiveness. If the U.S. rate is raised to 28 percent but the global minimum tax is 15 percent, firms may still have strong incentives to move their operations overseas.

Global tax negotiations have been ongoing at the G-7 and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development for the better part of a decade. But some experts said the speed with which the U.S. made major progress Saturday was striking nonetheless.

Alarm has grown among international tax experts about declining taxation. The average corporate tax rate globally was about 40 percent in 1980, falling to about 23 percent in 2020, according to the Tax Foundation, a conservative-leaning think-tank. As much as \$700 billion in taxes from the world's largest multinational firms was stashed in tax havens in 2017, research by a team of economists found.

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"It's an early and quick win for Yellen and Treasury, and it's sort of remarkable," said Steve Rosenthal, a tax expert at the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center, a think-tank. "This has been lingering for years and years — though of course Trump did not believe in multinationalism — and to start these negotiations in January and have a tentative agreement in June is pretty impressive."

Others stressed the obstacles that loomed ahead. Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a Republican former director of the Congressional Budget Office, has raised concerns about whether the U.S. will give up too much of its tax base in search of a deal with Europeans. He also stressed how many questions were left unresolved by Saturday's statement, including the structure of the 15 percent minimum tax and how it would function or be approved.

"It's easy to set at a table and agree, 'Yes we should have a 15 percent minimum tax.' It's another thing to pass through the U.S. Congress, and the U.K. parliament, and everyone else," Holtz-Eakin said. "We can agree on the concepts — I'm sure — but will we actually have a law enforced in every country?"

06.03.21

Likud party calls on supporters to demonstrate & delay swearing-in – up to June 21

06.03.21

'Crossing Red Lines': Netanyahu and Allies Up Pressure on Lawmakers to Torpedo New Government

Netanyahu's party calls on supporters to demonstrate outside the homes of lawmakers in last-ditch effort to keep Bennett-Lapid coalition from being formed

Michael Hauser TovSam Sokol Jun. 3, 2021

The leaders of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing bloc intensified their pressure campaign on Thursday against rival lawmakers in a last-ditch bid to prevent them from forming a new government.

The prime minister and his allies' focus has thus far been on prodding lawmakers belonging to the right-wing Yamina party, whose leader Naftali Bennett is set to assume

the premiership once the emergent coalition is voted into power by the Knesset, as well as on Mansour Abbas, whose United Arab List party is set to be part of the future coalition government headed by Bennett and Yesh Atid Chairman Yair Lapid.

On Thursday, Netanyahu's Likud party called on its supporters to demonstrate outside the homes of Yamina's Ayelet Shaked, second on the party's election slate, and Nir Orbach, who has expressed reservations about supporting his party's chosen course. Shaked was recently assigned a security detail after the Shin Bet warned of a rise in incitement against her, as were Bennett and Lapid.

Yamina lawmaker Amichai Chikli announced last month that he would oppose the formation of a Bennett-Lapid government and should Orbach join him, the Bennett-Lapid bloc would have to secure support from outside the coalition.

Taking to Twitter on Wednesday evening, only hours before Bennett and Lapid submitted their coalition to President Reuven Rivlin, coalition whip Miki Zohar of Likud called on Orbach and fellow Yamina lawmaker Idit Silman to defeat the effort, declaring that "they can still save the day."

"If they make this decision, it will bring about the support of hundreds of thousands of Israelis who will appreciate their heroism," he tweeted. "If it were up to me, I would be happy to have such heroes with us in Likud."

On Wednesday, Silman told The New York Times that she had been receiving a steady stream of harassing and threatening texts from opponents of the new government. "It's very hard," she said.

To fend off Netanyahu, Lapid and Bennett can't waste energy on internal squabbles
In rare move, Bennett assigned Shin Bet security after Lapid coalition deal

On Thursday, Orbach asked to retract his signature from a petition to replace Knesset Speaker Yariv Levin with Yesh Atid lawmaker Mickey Levy in an effort to enable the new coalition government to be sworn in as early as possible.

Knesset rules require that the new government be sworn in no later than a week from the next time that the Knesset convenes, meaning no later than a week from June 14. The longer Levin remains in office, the longer he can delay the swearing-in – up to June 21 at the latest.

According to the religious Zionist Makor Rishon newspaper, Alon Davidi, who was elected to the Knesset as number three on the Yamina roster but quit in April to return to his job as mayor of Sderot before taking office, met with Orbach in the Knesset on Wednesday to convince him not to support a Bennett-Lapid government.

Yamina lawmaker Matan Kahana, who is slated to become religious services minister in the new government, was quoted in the pro-Netanyahu daily Israel Hayom as saying that

members of his party were “under tremendous pressure” not to vote for the establishment of the coalition.

“It’s everywhere,” he said. “Social media, phone calls, protests outside homes – to the point of crossing some red lines. Some lawmakers feel their children are being threatened. The prime minister is definitely stirring the pot, but not just him.”

In his first public remarks since the new coalition was announced on Wednesday, Netanyahu called on “all Knesset members elected by right-wing votes” to come out in opposition to a “dangerous” and “left-wing” Lapid-Bennett government.

In a series of tweets, **Netanyahu slammed Bennett for “selling out” to Islamist party** United Arab List by agreeing to some of its demands on house demolitions, unrecognized Bedouin villages and budgets to handle issues affecting the Arab community.

06.03.21

Bennett sell-out to Islam party sways Orbach to withdraw; putting motion in jeopardy

06.03.21

Netanyahu and Bennett butt heads to persuade perceived Yamina weak link

Yamina chief calls fellow party member Nir Orbach for a meeting after pulling out of motion to replace Knesset speaker with more favorable candidate; **PM continues**

unfettered attempts to tear Yamina asunder

Moran Azualy | Published: **06.03.21** , 15:42

Notwithstanding coalition breakthrough, **Yamina head Naftali Bennett** tried to close ranks **with members of his party** on Thursday to try and **foil** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attempts to woo potential defectors and **hamstring** the **formation of a government aiming to oust him.**

Bennett met at his Ra'anana home with fellow Yamina **lawmaker Nir Orbach**, who appears to be an overhang of the budding government, ready to be snatched by the premier.

This is the **second time Bennett has met with Orbach** in the past 24 hours. The two also met overnight Thursday after all elements of the so-called **"bloc for change"** had agreed on a coalition deal, with **Bennett trying to dissuade Orbach from actively voting against** such a government.

Without Orbach, the eight factions that make up the potential fragile **coalition would only have 60 seats**, leaving it one seat short of mustering a majority in the 120-seat-strong Knesset.

In such a case, the factions will have to rely on lawmakers from the predominately Arab Joint List party to abstain in a vote on the formation of the government — a prospect

potentially too difficult for other members of Bennett's right-wing party and coalition partners New Hope to stomach.

Orbach has reportedly been avoiding calls from Prime Minister Netanyahu since Wednesday night.

Hours after Yesh Atid chief Yair Lapid announced to President Reuven Rivlin he had managed to form a government, "bloc for change" members submitted their signatures Thursday morning to replace Knesset Speaker Yariv Levin in a bid to fast-track the swearing-in of the government.

Fearing he'll try to block the Knesset vote to inaugurate the prospected government, giving Netanyahu almost two more weeks to try and break the bloc apart, the government-in-waiting sought to replace Levin — a senior member of the ruling Likud party and a confidant of Netanyahu — with Yesh Atid MK Mickey Levy.

However, Orbach withdrew his signature from the petition Thursday morning, putting the motion in jeopardy.

Meanwhile, the Likud leader slammed Naftali Bennett in a post on Twitter Thursday, accusing him of "selling out" the Negev to the Islamist Ra'am party.

"All legislators elected by votes from the right must oppose this dangerous left-wing government," Netanyahu said.

In response, Yamina posted a chart claiming Netanyahu had himself offered Ra'am even more far-reaching concessions to entice the party to join his coalition.

Netanyahu Thursday called together a meeting with faction leaders of his right-wing bloc, among other prominent right-wing leaders, to devise a strategy on how to thwart a Bennett-Lapid government, mounting pressure on the right-flank of the "bloc for change" through rabbis, activists and close associates.

The right-wing bloc and other affiliated organizations are also planning to hold Thursday evening a massive rally outside the Tel Aviv home of Yamina No. 2 Ayelet Shaked under the banner: "Return home."

A massive rally organized by the ultra-Orthodox Shas and United Torah Judaism parties was also in the cards.

Also Thursday, Bennett was extended full Shin Bet protection — usually only reserved for acting prime minister — after he received threats on his life.

Though his position has not yet been finalized, sources familiar with the decision said the agency decided to begin protecting Bennett over fears that anger at him from some parts of the political right could lead to attempts on his life.

06.03.21

Pending Knesset vote, Lapid-Bennett government made History joining Arabs

06.03.21

History made as Ra'am joins Lapid-Bennett government

Coalition agreement — the first in country's political history to include an Arab party — will see over NIS 20 million invested in fighting Arab sector's rampant crime and crumbling infrastructure, as well as policies aimed at solving community's housing crisis |24NEWS| Published: 06.03.21 , 13:41

Ra'am leader Mansour Abbas made Israeli political history Wednesday by signing an agreement that will for the first time see an Arab party join a government.

"We hope that it will work and that a government will be established after four rounds of elections," he told reporters at a Kfar Maccabiah in Ramat Gan.

Abbas also said he had agreed with the new government on a number of policies and budgets relating to the Arab sector.

"We have reached a critical mass of agreements in various areas that serve the interests of Arab society and provide solutions to its burning problems — planning, the housing crisis and, of course, combating violence and organized crime," he said.

According to a recent statement by the Islamist party, Yamina head Naftali Bennett and Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid promised Ra'am NIS 2.5 million (\$769,547) to tackle the rampant violence and organized crime in Arab society.

In addition, NIS 20 million (\$6,156,839) will be invested over the next 10 years to repair crumbling infrastructure in Arab towns and villages.

Abbas's party — the political wing of the southern branch of Israel's Islamic Movement — split from Israel's main Arab coalition, the Joint List, before the March 23 election after advocating that it will work with Netanyahu and other right-wing factions to improve living standards for Arabs.

Even before Ra'am announced signing, Yair Lapid's nascent coalition was widely seen as the most ideologically diverse in the country's history, uniting left- and right-wing parties to notably oust Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from power.

To get there, Bennett and Lapid agreed to a rotation plan, with the former becoming prime minister for the first two years.

The government-to-be is still pending a Knesset vote of approval.

06.03.21

Gunmen fired dozens of rounds at Ynet reporter's home as threat for journalist work

06.03.21

Gunmen open fire on Ynet Arab affairs reporter's home, nearly hit children

Hassan Shaalan, who had received threats on his life for his journalistic work before, says shooters showered his Tayibe home with bullets while family was inside, with one missing daughter's head by a few inches

Alexandra Lukash, Attila Somfalvi, Nir Cohen, Raanan Ben Tzur

Published: 06.03.21 , 12:53

Two masked gunmen fired dozens of rounds overnight Thursday at the home and car of Ynet's Arab affairs reporter Hassan Shaalan.

Three bullets struck near the beds of his 4-year-old son and 13-year-old daughter who were in their bedroom at the time, with one of the bullets reportedly missing the girl's head by a few inches.

The children were not harmed in the attack, but the gunfire had caused extensive property damage.

The shooters were standing outside the house for about an hour before the shooting and questioned neighbors to locate Shaalan's residence. They opened fire around 1:50am and one of the attackers hurled an expletive upon fleeing the scene.

Shaalan claimed he was not at odds with anyone and he has been most probably targeted for his journalistic work. He has covered the crime wave in Arab towns caused by out-of-control criminal gangs which had taken the lives of dozens of Arab citizens in recent years. He also covered the recent wave of civil unrest in mixed and Arab towns that erupted concurrently with Israel's latest military campaign in the Gaza Strip. Shaalan, who resides in the central Arab city of Tayibe, told the Ynet studio that he was working on his next report when suddenly bullets came flying in. At first, he thought it was a stray shooting, living in an area where gun violence is commonplace, but realized he was personally targeted when the attackers started shouting his name along with expletives.

Shaalan said he had received multiple threats on his life in the past, but this was the first time they materialized.

"There are people who threaten me, and I know them but ultimately, I always manage to deescalate the situation," Shaalan said. "This time, I wasn't warned that someone wanted to hurt me. I don't know who shot me and what for. I didn't cause harm to anyone, I'm not at odds with anyone. I'm not a criminal and I've got no ties to any criminal organization or money laundering. I'm an honest man. I'm always on the ground everywhere. They could have killed me while driving and not just at home."

"These criminals wanted to send a message — you better keep your mouth shut. They don't want us to report on what's going on in Arab society. I'm not afraid of anyone. I keep working as usual. I know I always work honestly and present things properly in a professional manner. This is the first time someone has shot up my house, and it's a very bad feeling because I did not hurt anybody. My children almost got murdered and I do not know what they will do to me now if I go out on the road. In Arab society, there is violence and murders all the time, and there is no solution to this phenomenon. I always say — 'Yesterday someone was murdered, tomorrow they will kill me, my wife, my son and my daughter'. The criminals roam free and there is no one to take care of them."

"I did not expect to get to this point," he added. "I want to take care of my family now. My wife is crying, and I need to calm my children down and go somewhere else. We will not stay home today."

Israeli **Journalist Union** Chairman Yair Tarchitsky **condemned the attack** on Shaalan and his family and **implored Israel Police** to exhaust all means to **bring the shooters to justice**.

06.03.21

Bennett diverse ideologies may withdraw Orbach's signature, jeopardizing the motion

06.03.21

After coalition success, government-in-waiting seeks to replace Knesset speaker
Members of 'coalition for change' sign off on **request to replace Likud's Yariv Levin with**
Yesh Atid's Mickey **Levy** in speakership post in order to **fast track swearing-in** of new
government; Yamina MK Nir **Orbach pulls signature**, jeopardizing motion
Moran Azulay | Updated: **06.03.21**, 09:17

Hours after Yesh Atid chief Yair Lapid announced to President Reuven Rivlin he had managed to form a government, members of his so-called "bloc for change" submitted their signatures Thursday morning to replace Knesset Speaker Yariv Levin.

The **government-in-waiting seeks to replace Levin** — a **senior** member of the ruling **Likud** party and a **confidant of** Prime Minister Benjamin **Netanyahu** — with Yesh Atid MK Mickey Levy.

In a document submitted to Knesset Secretary-General Yardena Meller-Horowitz, "bloc for change" parties requested that the **vote to elect the 24th Knesset speaker** be placed on the **agenda for the next plenum**, which **will convene on Monday**.

However, Yamina MK Nir **Orbach withdrew his signature** from the petition Thursday morning, **jeopardizing the motion**.

Lapid struck deals with an amalgam of parties from across the political spectrum with less than an hour to go before a midnight deadline that would have seen the mandate for forming a government return to Rivlin and likely sent Israel into its fifth round of elections since April 2019.

The budding **coalition's** various elements hold a **diverse** set of **ideologies** and its members would have **little in common apart from the desire to** send Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, to the **opposition**.

Lapid and his "bloc for change" co-leader Yamina Chairman Naftali **Bennett** — who is **poised to take the premiership** first in a power-sharing deal — now must maintain their fragile coalition until it is sworn in, and are working to advance the convening of the plenum in Knesset to the earliest possible date, through replacing the Knesset speaker. Immediately after Lapid's announcement to the president, the "bloc for change" turned to Levin and demanded he **convene the plenum to appoint his replacement**. **Levin**, who

serves as interim Knesset speaker, **may try to delay the vote** on the formation of the government. First published: 09:06 , 06.03.21

06.02.21

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott deployed Police & National Guard to secure the border

06.02.21

Gov. Greg Abbott to Newsmax: I'm Going to Do Biden's Job on Border

(Newsmax/"Greg Kelly Reports")

By Eric Mack | Wednesday, 02 June 2021 08:15 PM

Texas is taking the **border crisis** into its own hands, issuing a disaster **declaration** because "the **Biden** administration has **abandoned** it," according to GOP Gov. Greg Abbott on Newsmax.

"They're **completely ignoring the crisis on the border**, and because of that, **as governor**, I am **having to step up and do the federal government's job**," Abbott told "Greg Kelly Reports" on Wednesday.

"We are going to instill safety. We're **going to be doing things in Texas that no state has ever done before** when it comes to **cracking down on anybody coming across** the border. **We're going to step up and secure the border** even more than we already are."

Abbott told Kelly he has already deployed more than **1,000 Texas** Department of **Public Safety** officers as well as National Guard troops.

"We're going to ratchet up our efforts along the border to make sure we help secure our state and our country," **Abbott vowed**.

Abbott added that **U.S. Homeland Security** Secretary Alejandro **Mayorkas** "**seems to live in a different universe**."

"**He says the border is secure**," Abbott lamented. "It would be outrageous, but it sounds bizarre and crazy, because **they literally have no idea**. And I can't tell if they're **just trying to disinform** the public or they really don't know. But they have no idea [of] the magnitude of what's going on at the border."

Abbott noted that **neither** President Joe **Biden** **nor his border czar**, Vice President Kamala **Harris**, **has visited the border**, adding that Mayorkas has merely "flown by."

"There's a **problem** at our border that's **killing people across the country**, and that's the amount of fentanyl that the **cartels are coming across** the border with, just this year alone, the first four months of this year," Abbott continued, noting human trafficking by Mexican drug cartels in addition to drug trafficking. "There's **enough fentanyl** at the

border, apprehended by the Department of Public Safety, to kill every man, woman and child in the entire state of New York.

"Biden's border policy is deadly dangerous across the country, and they are ignoring that danger."

Abbott also denounced counties in Texas "trying to create their own election laws" in the last presidential election, making election integrity reform much needed in his state.

"That's exactly why we're passing the election integrity reforms that we are — to rein in counties that are not going with the law passed by the state legislature, which is the mandate in the United States Constitution," Abbott said, echoing the objections of the Trump campaign and Republicans that mainstream media has adopted the Democrats' political talking point by claiming it is an "attack on democracy," as Biden asserted in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on Tuesday.

Abbott also noted he signed a bill to "defund cities that defund the police," as Democrats have called for in the name of social justice.

"For this to happen in Texas? It did happen in Austin, so I signed a bill to defund Austin," Abbott told Kelly. "Here's the deal: People shouldn't be taxed in a city, and pay revenue to a city, that will not provide police for them."

Abbott said the bill will eliminate a city's ability to increase property taxes, sales taxes or fees.

"This is going to bankrupt the city of Austin," Abbott said. "They need to be looking for a bankruptcy lawyer real quick, because their decision to defund the police will be catastrophic for their city and their bank account."

The myriad aggressive actions against liberal city activism in Texas is one of the biggest reasons the governor has earned the recent endorsement of former President Donald Trump.

"This endorsement is remarkable," Abbott said, adding he took a personal call from Trump right before the Newsmax appearance.

"Unlike what the Democrats are trying to sell, Hispanics on the border really do want their border secure.

"He's all-in 100%. When he gets behind you, nothing can stop it."

06.03.21

Protests against Bennett & Shaked Coalition prompt Shin Bet to assign security

06.03.21

In Rare Move, Bennett Assigned Shin Bet Security After Lapid Coalition Deal

Israel's internal security service warned of an uptick in incitement against Bennett and Yesh Atid's Lapid **Jun. 3, 2021 10:26 AM**

Israel's internal security service said it started providing Prime Minister-designate Naftali Bennett with personal security on Thursday, after he signed a coalition deal with Yair Lapid to end Benjamin Netanyahu's longstanding reign.

This move is unusual as Israel's internal security service only protects the prime minister, president and leader of the opposition.

On Monday, the Shin Bet warned of an uptick in incitement against Bennett, his no. 2 in Yamina, Ayelet Shaked, and Yesh Atid leader Lapid, and ordered the police and the Knesset security to provide additional protection for Bennett and Shaked.

The security for them has been increased to level 5 – one level less than the highest level of security.

Shin Bet tightens security for Lapid, Bennett and Shaked as incitement spikes
Dozens protest outside home of Yamina's Shaked as coalition deadline nears
Shin Bet: Incitement against Gantz is like what preceded Rabin's assassination
Lapid is assigned a Shin Bet security detail since he is Israel's opposition head.

Police have already intensified patrols around Bennett and Shaked's houses, and both now have permanent security guards based in their homes. Bennett will also use an armored vehicle for specific activities.

Police sources told Haaretz there was no specific investigation into incitement against Bennett or Shaked, but the police are collecting intelligence on the matter and monitoring online activity.

06.03.21

Lapid and Bennett require Abbas of Ra'am to fill the left-wing government

06.03.21

Netanyahu responds to change coalition: 'Dangerous left-wing government'

"It hasn't even been 24 hours, and Lapid and Bennett are leaning on Ra'am!" stated the Likud on Thursday, following Netanyahu's tweet.

By REUTERS, JERUSALEM POST STAFF **JUNE 3, 2021 16:10**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday fought back against an agreement by his political opponents for a government of left-wing, centrist and right-wing parties aimed at unseating him.

Netanyahu, facing the prospect of an end to his 12-year run as premier, said on Twitter "all legislators elected by votes from the right must oppose this dangerous left-wing government."

It was the first public pushback by Netanyahu, who heads the right-wing Likud party, against centrist politician Yair Lapid's announcement about 35 minutes before a Wednesday night deadline that he had succeeded in forming a governing coalition.

"It hasn't even been 24 hours, and Lapid and Bennett are leaning on the Joint List!" stated the Likud on Thursday, following Netanyahu's tweet.

"The Joint List is rushing to take advantage of the opportunity to get rid of a right-wing prime minister by filling in the missing signatures.

"This is iron-clad proof of complete cooperation between the Joint List and the left-wing government of Bennett and Lapid."

06.03.21

4,000+ rockets by Hamas; IDF response removed most Jihad terror-structure

06.03.21

Op. Guardian of the Walls: Behind the scenes targeting Hamas terror

Israel began striking targets to severely degrade the military capabilities of the terror groups in the Gaza Strip in an attempt to effect long-term deterrence and calm.

By ANNA AHRONHEIM JUNE 3, 2021 16:51

Operation Guardian of the Walls lasted 11 days, but it was one of the more intense wars between Israel's military and Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists in the Gaza Strip.

By many measures, this round was the most intense escalation since Operation Protective Edge in 2014. Following rocket fire on Jerusalem by Hamas, Israel began striking targets with the intention of severely degrading the military capabilities of the terror groups in the blockaded enclave in an attempt to bring about long-term deterrence and calm.

Despite the relative quiet on the southern front in recent months, the IDF was busy scouting thousands of targets in the densely populated Strip over the past two years fully expecting another round of fighting with the groups to break out at any moment.

Hundreds of targets were struck by the IDF mainly from the air in response to the over 4,000 rockets and missiles fired by the terror groups. Information on hundreds of the targets hit had been gathered in real-time, including missile launchers that were aimed at Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

Other targets included rocket launchers, rocket manufacturing, production and storage sites, military intelligence offices, drones, residences of commanders, and Hamas's naval

commando unit where Israel has destroyed most of the infrastructure and weaponry, including several unmanned autonomous GPS-guided submarines that can carry 30 kilograms of explosives.

The IDF also targeted several high rise buildings, including in the affluent neighborhood of Rimal.

Lieut.-Col. (Res) T. commanded the team behind the strike on one such building, the 14-story Shorouq tower located in the center of Gaza City. It was the third such high-rise building to be destroyed by the IDF in the Operation that began on May 10.

The building that the IDF says had housed Hamas military intelligence offices was struck in the afternoon hours “when there were fewer people in the building,” he said.

According to the officer, the offices were situated on two floors and were “more interior which made it almost impossible to hit” without destroying the entire building. The building also housed a dental clinic that was closed because of the fighting. “But we called the owners and made sure they came to get their equipment first.”

“We don't try to destroy [for the sake of it]. We want to cause minimal damage to civilians but we won't give up just because it's in a civilian building in a civilian area. We didn't have a choice,” he said.

T. told the Post that his role was to use all the intelligence available to make sure that there were no civilian casualties in the strikes targeting the groups' infrastructure.

“The planning is very precise and we use our intelligence assets to reach those who live in the buildings and those surrounding it to make sure that they leave,” the officer said.

Before the IAF destroys a building, it delivers a non-lethal warning hit to the roof of the building known as “knocking on the roof” shortly delivering the bombs that bring down the building.

That warning “does not give Hamas the time to take out anything from the building,” he said.

T told The Jerusalem Post that it was Hamas and PIJ who were attacking Israel with long-range missiles and “we struck back because we were attacked.”

According to him, Israel “had better intelligence that was more precise,” and that caused less civilian casualties and more combat casualties.

The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza said at least 243 Palestinians were killed during the fighting, including 66 children and teens, and that 1,910 people wounded. The IDF says over 100 terror operatives were killed and that some of the civilian casualties were caused when Hamas rockets fell short of their intended targets, or because civilian homes collapsed after an airstrike on Hamas's tunnel network.

In a first interview since the fighting ended, Hamas's Gaza leader, Yehya Sinwar told the Associated Press last week that 80 operatives were killed in the fighting, 57 were affiliated with Hamas and 22 with Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Lieutenant (res) E was a firepower officer in a strike team responsible for coordinating intelligence with the IAF in real-time on Hamas's military infrastructure. Her main goal, she said, was to hit terror targets without damaging non-terror infrastructure, or killing anyone, both combatants and civilians.

According to E, there are several kinds of strikes, those targeting people and others hitting military infrastructure.

“Even if we knew that there was someone who was an operative, we did everything we could to make sure there was nobody in the area. If there was an operative we would get him in another way, another strike,” she said.

Each strike can take hours to execute to ensure that innocent civilians were not harmed, she said, adding that there were several times that the IDF called off an airstrike “because civilians were in the area. We did that in real-time.”

E told the Post that following the “knock on the roof” warning, “ Hamas understood that we were preparing to strike and wouldn’t approach the area. It’s not new to them. It’s not that they don’t know we are going to strike, they know and they leave.”

According to E, the terror groups “don’t have the time to take their weapons. There’s not really any time in the short timeframe that we give them to remove their infrastructure.

It’s not just one rocket or one laptop... But should anyone approach the area, we understand that it’s terror-related.”

The decision to place military infrastructure in civilian areas contravenes the laws of armed conflict, but according to E, “it’s not that they don’t care, they take advantage.”

“ Hamas places their military infrastructure within civilian infrastructure and if we hit a building that has munitions inside, the IDF can’t control the explosion,” she said.

Hamas’s underground tunnel network dubbed the “Metro” was also heavily damaged in the air strikes. Military sources said they were able to map the network consisting of hundreds of kilometers of tunnel under residential areas to a degree where they knew almost everything about them.

The mapping of Hamas’s underground network was done by a massive intelligence-gathering process that was helped by the technological developments and use of Big Data to fuse all the intelligence. Once mapped, the IDF was able to create a full picture of the network both above and below ground, with details such as the depth of the tunnels, their thickness and the nature of the routes. With that, the military was able to construct an attack plan that was used during the operation.

While the IDF acknowledges that it hasn’t destroyed the entire network, it asserts that it struck parts of the network that makes it nearly impossible for Hamas to use it again.

And, the ability of the IDF to crack Hamas’s network and completely map it removes one of the central dimensions of Hamas’s combat strategy.

“Years of work, outside-the-box thinking and the fusion of all the resources of the intelligence division together with elements in the field led to the breakthrough solution of the underground network,” a senior officer in the intelligence division said last week.

Staff Sgt. E. worked on the plan for four months before the fighting broke out and was surprised when she heard that the network was going to be hit.

“I didn’t think it was going to happen until the planes were in the sky,” she told the Post.

“During the strikes, we were surprised as a lot of people worked on this for years.”

The fighting, she said, was “very dynamic” and they were always preparing what was going to be hit next.

“I think at the end of the day, Hamas was surprised as to how much we knew about their underground network, they didn’t expect it,” St.-Sgt. E said, adding that “we showed the enemy that they can’t do everything that they want without us knowing.”

But according to Hamas chief Sinwar, Israel only destroyed 5% of the network as the group has over 500 kilometers of tunnels under the blockaded enclave.

“Israel failed to direct a strike to kill the political, military, and security leadership [of Palestinian resistance groups] and destroy their command and control rooms,” he told journalists in Gaza after the ceasefire came into effect.

Sinwar also warned that the group has 10,000 “martyrs” inside Israel who are “ready to respond” if Jerusalem is harmed.

St.-Sgt. E, from Ashdod, told the Post that she had to detach herself from the rocket attacks that were targeting her home city.

“There are rockets flying over my house and I was sitting here being professional and not with my family in our shelter. I had to separate myself between what was happening and what was happening to my family and my country so that I could do my job.”

In an interview with Channel 12 News, the head of the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency in Gaza Matthias Schmale acknowledged that while the “viciousness and ferocity of the strikes was heavily felt,” he had “the impression that there is a huge sophistication in the way the Israeli military struck.”

According to Lt.-Col. T, the strikes “caused a lot of damage to their infrastructure and manufacturing. In my opinion, the strikes were more effective than those of 2014, despite the fact that the war was longer.”

Though the ceasefire was signed “we could have continued for a long time, we were ready then and we can continue now if they launch rockets,” he added.

According to Lt.-E, Hamas does not differentiate between targets, “for them, everything is kosher,” including the launching of rockets towards Jerusalem that brought about this round of fighting.

“The IDF would not have let rockets hit the Temple Mount,” Lt. E said. “The difference between Israel and Hamas is that the IDF would have used the Iron Dome to intercept it, but Hamas fired their rockets towards it.”

Operation Guardian of the Walls was not Lt. E’s first war with Hamas. She took charge of over 80 reconnaissance troops in the command and control room in Kissufim in southern Israel in 2014 and Operation Protective Edge broke out a week later.

“Now everything has changed. The character of the targets, how we make decisions,” she said.

“The ability to bring about an end of the operation within 11 days using only air strikes and no troops maneuvering inside Gaza and risking the lives of many troops, is critical,” she continued, adding that “the achievement of this round is that Hamas knows they can’t fire a rocket or carry out any attacks on Israel without a response.”