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West Bank Planning approved mall, school & synagogues, but no housing yet

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Palestinians, settlers clash over home ownership in Jerusalem neighborhood

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Hamas leaders meet UN mediators in Gaza, vowing violence if no relief

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Israel okays new settlement construction in first such move by Bennett's government. Although Civil Administration's subcommittee on settlements approves construction of schools, shopping malls and synagogues, settler groups say no significant construction of housing units in the area has been okayed since January.

Elisha Ben Kimon | Published: 06.23.21 , 18:21

Israel approved on Wednesday new construction in some Jewish settlements in the West Bank in first such move okayed by the government of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett.

The subcommittee on settlements in the Civil Administration approved limited construction plans in settlements of Elkana, Mishor Adumim, Karnei Shomron, Kfar

Among constructions that were approved are a school for children with special needs in Elkana, a shopping mall in Mishor Adumim and yeshivas and synagogues in Karnei Shomron and Kfar Adumim.

In addition, a small number of housing units were also approved for construction in Yitzhar. A total of 31 construction units were approved during the meeting.

The subcommittee usually approves individual construction plans on a small scale. Large-scale and extensive construction projects are usually approved by the Higher Planning Council of the Civil Administration. The council normally convenes every three months but has not convened since January of this year.

No date has been set for the Higher **Planning Council** to meet in the near future. The Yesha Council, an umbrella organization of municipal councils of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, said in response the Higher Planning Council should be convened immediately to approve large-scale housing projects in the area. "We have been waiting for six months for **approval of housing plans** and that **has not happened yet**," said the statement.

06.22.21

Palestinians, settlers clash over home ownership in Jerusalem neighborhood

06.22.21

Palestinians, settlers clash in tense Jerusalem neighborhood

Israeli forces say they arrested 4 suspects in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood **following clashes over home ownership** row, which has been put on hold in the wake of recent unrest in the capital and the 11-day Gaza war
Associated Press | Published: **06.22.21**, 10:22

Palestinians and settlers hurled stones, chairs and fireworks at each other overnight in a tense Jerusalem neighborhood at the center of a legal row **over ownership of homes** currently **rented by Arab families**, officials said Tuesday.

The **threatened evictions** fueled protests and clashes in the runup to last month's 11-day Gaza war and pose a test for Israel's new governing coalition, which includes three pro-settler parties but is hoping to sideline the Palestinian issue to avoid internal divisions.

Israeli police and border officials said they arrested four suspects in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. It was unclear who started the brawl. One woman was reportedly injured when she was hit in the back by a stone, police said.

The Red Crescent **emergency** service said its crews **treated 20 Palestinians**, including **16 suffering from pepper spray** and **tear gas** and others **wounded by rubber-coated bullets**. Two other people were wounded, including an elderly man who was hit in the head, it said.

The eruption of violence is the latest friction in Sheikh Jarrah, where weeks of unrest captured international attention ahead of the 11-day Israel-Hamas war last month. The ceasefire took effect on May 21, but the long-running campaign by Jewish settlers to evict dozens of Palestinian families continues.

And so the cycle of tension endures, in a stark early test for Israel's new coalition government, which is just over a week old.

At the helm under a rotation agreement is Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, head of the right-wing Yamina party. In two years, he'll be replaced by Yair Lapid, leader of centrist Yesh Atid. And leading the opposition is Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, ousted from the premiership after holding the post for 12 years.

An intervention by Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit at the height of the unrest has put the most **imminent evictions on hold**. But rights groups say evictions could still proceed in the coming months as international attention wanes, potentially igniting another round of bloodshed.

The settlers have been waging a decades-long campaign to evict the families from densely populated Palestinian neighborhoods in the so-called Holy Basin just outside the walls of the Old City, in one of the most sensitive parts of east Jerusalem.

Israel captured east Jerusalem, home to holy sites sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, in the 1967 war and annexed it in a move not recognized internationally. **Israel views the entire city as its capital, while the Palestinians want east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state.**

The settlers say the **homes are built on land** that was **owned by Jews prior to the 1948** war surrounding Israel's creation. **Israeli law allows Jews to reclaim such property, a right denied to Palestinians** who lost lands and homes in the same conflict.

06.22.21

Hamas leaders meet UN mediators in Gaza, vowing violence if no relief

06.22.21

Gaza factions warn Israel delaying relief would reignite violence

At the end of a **joint meeting**, Palestinians say continued **calm contingent upon** Jerusalem providing **humanitarian gestures** and launch veiled **threat to resume rocket fire**

Lior Levy| Published: **06.22.21** , 23:02

Gaza Strip terrorist groups launched a warning to Israel on Tuesday, saying that **if Jerusalem stalls in** providing humanitarian **relief** to the seaside territory, **they will have to resort to violence.**

At the end of a meeting at the office of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, the Palestinians presented a **list of demands** from Israel that included the **opening of border crossings**, allowing the transfer of **financial aid from Qatar** and the **reopening** of Gaza's **fishing zone.**

The terrorist organizations said that if Israel refuses to **comply with their demands**, **they will resume incendiary balloon attacks** into Israeli soil **and riots at the border fence**, and even issued a veiled threat to **renew rocket fire.**

"We warn the Israeli enemy and its allies of delaying the lifting of the siege. The enemy will not succeed with its extortion policy and we will not kick back as our people are pushed over," the groups said in a statement.

Sinwar and **Hamas leadership met with UN mediators in the Gaza Strip on Monday** to consolidate a cease fire agreement with Israel but **failed to reach an understanding.**

The parties met in order to prevent last month's conflict between the Jewish State and Gaza's terrorist factions from rekindling, but Israel refused to comply with any of Hamas' demands.

Sinwar told the media that Jerusalem's steadfastness was an outgrowth of its failures to understand the motivations of the Palestinian people.

"Israel continues with its policies against the Palestinian people, against the [Palestinian] prisoners and against the Gaza Strip and tries to extort us when it comes to the issue of easing the living conditions of the residents of the Gaza Strip," Sinwar said.

"We have informed the UN representatives that we would not accept this. The meeting was bad, it was not good at all."

06.23.21

US shut over 33 Iranian Islamic news websites for propaganda around the world

06.23.21

U.S. takes down Iranian run and affiliated news sites, alleging disinformation

33 websites seized in major crackdown include pro-Hamas Palestine Today and English-language Press TV, described by ADL as 'leading dispenser of conspiratorial anti-Semitism'; notice posted by American authorities said websites were targeted 'as part of law enforcement action'

Associated Press | Published: 06.23.21 , 09:48

American authorities seized a range of Iran's state-linked news website domains they accused of spreading disinformation, the U.S. Justice Department said Tuesday, a move that appeared to be a far-reaching crackdown on Iranian media amid heightened tensions between the two countries.

The Justice Department said 33 of the seized websites were used by the Iranian Islamic Radio and Television Union, which was singled out by the U.S. government last October for what officials described as efforts to spread disinformation and sow discord among American voters ahead of the 2020 presidential election.

The U.S. says three other seized websites were operated by Kata'ib Hizballah, which more than a decade ago was designated a foreign terrorist organization. The website domains are owned by U.S. companies, but despite the sanctions, neither the IRTVU nor KH obtained the required licenses from the U.S. government before using the domain names, according to the Justice Department.

The Justice Department announcement came hours after the Iranian state-run news agency IRNA revealed the U.S. government seizures without providing further information.

The takedowns come as world powers scramble to resurrect Tehran's tattered 2015 nuclear deal and just **days after the election** victory **of Iran's** hard-line judiciary chief, Ebrahim **Raisi**.

On Monday, Raisi, known for his hostility to the West, staked out a hardline position in his first news conference. He ruled out the possibilities of meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden or negotiating over Tehran's ballistic missile program and support for regional militias — concerns the Biden administration wants addressed in future talks.

Relations between Iran and the U.S. deteriorated following former president Donald Trump's 2018 withdrawal from Tehran's nuclear deal and the return of devastating sanctions on the country. That decision has seen Iran, over time, gradually abandon every limit on uranium enrichment. The country is now enriching uranium to 60%, its highest level ever, though still short of weapons-grade levels.

Iran provides support to militant groups in the region, such as Lebanon's militant Hezbollah and Yemen's Houthi rebels, as it seeks to wield its influence far afield and counter its foes.

On Tuesday, visiting the addresses of a handful of sites, including Iran state television's English-language arm Press TV, Yemeni Houthi-run Al-Masirah satellite news channel and Iranian state TV's Arabic-language channel, Al-Alam, produced a federal takedown notice.

It said the **websites were seized** "as part of law enforcement action" **by the U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security, Office of Export Enforcement** and the **Federal Bureau of Investigation**.

The U.S. government also took over the domain name of the news website Palestine Today, which backs Gaza-based Islamic militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad, redirecting the site to the same takedown notice.

Press TV, launched in June 2007, is the state-run Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting's English-language service. Its Iran-based website, PressTV.ir, was not affected.

Most of the domains seized appeared to be ".net," ".com" and ".tv" domains. The first two are generic top-level domains as opposed to country-specific domains, while ".tv" is owned by the Pacific island nation of Tuvalu but administered by the U.S. company Verisign.

Seizing a domain on a major country-specific top-level domain such as Iran's ".ir" would be apt to produce widespread international condemnation as a violation of sovereignty. It's not the first time that the U.S. has seized domain names of sites it accuses of spreading disinformation.

Last October, the Department of Justice announced the takedown of nearly **100 websites linked to Iran's** powerful Revolutionary **Guard**. The U.S. said the sites, operating under the guise of genuine news outlets, were waging a "global disinformation campaign" to influence U.S. policy and push Iranian **propaganda around the world**.

Yemen's Houthi rebel group announced that its Al-Masirah satellite news channel went offline Tuesday without prior notice. It said the channel would continue in its mission of "confronting the American and Israeli acts of piracy against our nation, by any means."

Responsibility for providing name service for the domain name presstv.com was apparently switched to an Amazon name server on Tuesday at mid-afternoon European time, said internet infrastructure expert Ron Guilmette. Cybersecurity researchers at RiskIQ found a total of 24 seized sites sharing the same Amazon name server.

There are no private television or radio stations in Iran. Satellite dishes, while widespread, also are illegal. That leaves IRIB with a monopoly on domestic airwaves. Marzieh Hashemi, a prominent Press TV anchor who, in 2019, was arrested as a material witness in an unspecified criminal case and has appeared before a grand jury in Washington, told The Associated Press that the channel was struggling to “figure out the reasons” for the seizure.

While airing in Iran, Press TV focuses predominantly on international affairs through the lens of how leaders in the Islamic Republic see the world. Fierce criticism of British and American foreign policy is common. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, IRIB has been in the hands of hard-liners who back Iran’s government.

Press TV has previously run into trouble with Western authorities over its reporting. The Anti-Defamation League has criticized the channel as “one of the world’s leading dispensers of conspiratorial anti-Semitism in English.”