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05.01.22

Israel blocks PA-US activist from travel to World Social Forum in Mexico

05.01.22

Israel blocks Palestinian activist from traveling abroad

Head of civil-society group blacklisted by Israel for alleged terror ties declined exit from West Bank, calls travel ban 'an attempt to silence the Palestinian voice'

Associated Press | Published: 05.01.22, 21:07

Israel has prevented the director of a Palestinian civil-society group from traveling abroad to attend a professional conference in Mexico.

Ubai Aboudi is the head of Bisan, one of six Palestinian groups that Israel last year designated a terrorist organization. Israeli officials declined to comment on the travel ban.

In an interview, Aboudi said he tried to exit the West Bank last week in order to travel to the World Social Forum, an annual gathering of civil society groups that this year is taking place in Mexico. But he said he was stopped by Israeli officials at the crossing into Jordan.

"I was informed that I am banned from traveling. I asked why I am banned from traveling. They said they did not want to inform me," he said. Aboudi, who is a U.S. citizen, said that just a month earlier, he traveled to Jordan without any problems.

The Bisan Center for Research and Development is a nonprofit that says it is committed to promoting a Palestinian society based on "freedom, justice, equality and dignity." Aboudi has been arrested in the past by both Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which administers autonomous areas of the West Bank, for his political activities.

Bisan is among six Palestinian human rights groups that Israel last year effectively outlawed after designating them terrorist organizations.

Israel says the groups have ties to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — a small Palestinian faction with an armed wing that has carried out deadly attacks on Israelis. The PFLP is considered a terrorist group by Israel and its Western allies.

But Israel has provided little evidence backing up its claims against the six groups. The groups all continue to operate, though the Israeli crackdown has concerned international donors and caused some to cut ties.

Aboudi says he has no ties to the PFLP. The activists have said the Israeli move is an attempt to silence groups that have documented harsh treatment against Palestinians over the years.

"There is no explanation for what happened to me except that this was an attempt to silence the Palestinian voice," Aboudi said.

05.01.22

Abbas rejects Hamas leader Sinwar calling Ra'am party to leave coalition

05.01.22

Bennett slams Hamas for its calls to end the current coalition

Bennett says Yahya Sinwar's remarks are a clear sign that Hamas does not like this government, alluding to its preference for Netanyahu; Ra'am's Abbas in response to accusations says his party owes Sinwar nothing and is committed only to Arabs in Israel
Einav Halabi | Published: 05.01.22, 13:47

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Sunday, responded to a speech by Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar calling on Islamist Ra'am party to leave the coalition.

Sinwar said the Israeli Arab Islamist party should not cooperate with the Israeli government in a speech on Saturday, where he also called on Arab citizens of Israel to take up arms and carry out terror attacks.

He called on Ra'am leader Mansour Abbas to dismantle the Israeli government and said he was a traitor to Muslims, for being a part of it.

"It seems that it is already perfectly clear at this point that Hamas does not like this government," Bennett said at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting. "Perhaps they miss the Qatari cash transfers," he said, referring to the practice of the previous government led by Benjamin Netanyahu, to allow Qatari aid to be delivered in cash to the Gaza Strip. His government had ended that practice.

"Maybe they just don't like our joint work to improve the lives of the Arabs in Israel," Bennett said. "This is a very important turning point, in which all masks come off, Hamas's desire to overthrow our government says it all, and we must not let Sinwar win," he said. "Within all of the political noise, this government also made good progress, especially on the economy."

Sinwar directed his words directly at Abbas. "I want to turn to Ra'am members and Abbas - the security network that you provide to the government harms Al-Aqsa mosque and it is a crime that is unforgivable, he said. "You can't provide support to any government that makes decisions to harm and divide Al-Aqsa. History will remember this Abbas."

"When an Arab man says this country is Jewish, it's vile, and believe me I tried to find a delicate way to say it. An Arab person who says this country isn't a racist state of Jewish supremacy - its despicable and it must be stopped," Sinwar added.

Sinwar also referred to the Islamist Ra'am party's suspension of its partnership in the current coalition, over recent violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces on Temple Mount.

"Our brothers in the southern branch of the Islamic Movement, you have to make a decision now and not just suspend your activities in the Knesset. If you have a conscience, tonight you have to decide."

Several hours after Sinwar's speech, MK Abbas rejected Sinwar's allegations. "We reject Yahya Sinwar's accusations and owe him nothing. We are only committed to our Arab society here in Israel. We have achieved a lot of goals, and we still have a long way to go for a better future for our society." Abbas said Sinwar should concentrate on Gaza and not on the Arab citizens of Israel.

Leaders of the predominately Arab Joint List had also stated in the past that Sinwar should remove himself for internal Arab affairs and concentrate on Gaza.

05.01.22

Earthquake between Cyprus & Lebanon measured 4.2 rocks northern Israel

05.01.22

Earthquake off Lebanon coast rocks northern Israel

Earlier quake occurs less than a week ago off the coast of Cyprus; no damage or injuries reported in Israel; Homefront command publishes recommended steps to be taken in case of earthquake

Ahiya Raved| Published: 05.01.22, 12:56

An earthquake measuring 3.7 on the Richter scale off the coast of Lebanon on Sunday, was felt in Haifa.

No damage or injuries were reported in Israel.

European EMSC said the quake measured 4.2.

A week ago, an earthquake off the coast of Cyprus was also felt in Israel.

The IDF Homefront command published steps Israelis must consider in case of an earthquake.

When indoors: Exit the building if possible or enter a secure room and leave doors and windows open.

If no such room exist, step into building stairwell and walk down until it is possible to go outside.

If none of those options are available, sit under a heavy piece of furniture to protect against falling objects.

When outdoors: remain in an open area as far as possible from buildings, power lines and object, which may fall.

When on the sea shore: move away from the water to a distance of at least one kilometer, or climb up to a fourth story or higher, in case of tsunami. Make use of signs directing an escape from the shore.

When in the car, on the road: Stop at the side of the road and wait for the tremor to end. Avoid overpasses or bridges.

04.30.22,

West Bank guard killed; suspects & weapons captured in day-long manhunt

04.30.22,

Israeli security forces arrest suspects in deadly Ariel terror shooting

Two suspects detained without resistance in a raid in nearby Palestinian town and their weapons seized at the tail end of a rigorous day-long manhunt; 'We will not let terror rear its head,' Lapid says

Yoav Zitun, Yossi Yehoshua | Published: 04.30.22, 20:22

IDF troops and counterterrorism officers arrested two Palestinians on Saturday suspected to have carried out the deadly shooting that claimed the life of an Israeli security guard outside the West Bank settlement of Ariel the night before.

The suspects were arrested in the nearby Palestinian town of Qarawat Bani Hassan. The two did not put up any resistance and both their weapons were also seized in the raid.

They were taken in by the Shin Bet security agency for further questioning.

Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai praised the officers for capturing the alleged attackers in less than 24 hours.

"The arrest tonight is a determined message that embodies Israel Police's policy, which operates on all fronts and with all its units, including the special units, in order to thwart acts of terrorism and arrest anyone who harms or seeks to harm Israeli citizens and members of the security forces," he said.

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid also tweeted to praise the swift action and added that "every terrorist should know that the security forces will get them, their accomplices and those who sent them. We will not let terror rear its head."

On Friday night, two assailants pulled up at the settlement's gate armed with Carl Gustav submachine guns and opened fire at the guard shack. They then got out of the vehicle and shot the 23-year-old guard from point-blank.

The guard shielded his partner with his body and took three of at least ten bullets fired, killing him.

One of the gunmen then ran back to the car, made a U-turn and picked up the other assailant, who was waiting for him on the other side of the road.

Tomer Fein, a paramedic for the Magen David Adom ambulance service, who was among the first to arrive at the scene, said: "When we arrived, we saw a man - unconscious with gunshot wounds. He was not breathing and did not have a pulse. We performed medical tests and had to pronounce his death."

According to footage from the scene, the two did not enter Ariel itself and fled in the direction of a nearby village.

They arrived at the entrance to the settlement in a blue Suzuki with Israeli license plates, which apparently belonged in the past to a car that was taken off the road. The terrorists' vehicle was later found after being set on fire and abandoned.

The IDF launched a manhunt after the gunmen and surrounded the Palestinian town of Salfit south of Ariel. Security forces searched everyone entering and leaving the town.

Hamas welcomed the attack and said that "Ariel was built on our occupied lands in Salfit. This attack and the ongoing resistance operations dispel the illusions of those who thought that the settlers' actions and daily crimes against our people, our country and our holy places would go without an answer from the resistance."

Meanwhile, a video was released showing a masked man in military fatigue accepting responsibility for the attack on behalf of the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, the military wing of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah movement. The authenticity of the video is unclear.

The attack in Ariel joins a spate of Islamist terrorist attacks in Israeli cities since late March which claimed the lives of 15 Israelis.

On April 7, Tomer Morad and Eitam Magini, 27-year-old childhood friends from Kfar Saba, were shot dead by a Palestinian gunman while out for a drink at a Tel Aviv pub.

Hours later, 35-year-old Barak Lufan, a father of three from Givat Shmuel who was critically wounded in the attack, succumbed to his wounds in the hospital.

The terrorist was located hours after the attack hiding outside a mosque in Tel Aviv's Jaffa and was killed in a firefight after shooting at Israeli forces.

A week earlier, five people had been killed in a shooting attack in Bnei Brak. A Palestinian terrorist from the Jenin area shot dead four civilians and was then killed in a shootout with police, in which officer Amir Khouri was also killed.

Two days earlier, Border Police officers Yazan Fallah and Shiral Aboukaret were killed by two Islamic State-affiliated Israeli terrorists from Umm al-Fahm who ambushed them at a bus stop in Hadera. The terrorists were killed by Border Police officers and a Shin Bet operative who were dining at a nearby restaurant and heard the shooting.

The week before, four Israelis were killed in a ramming and stabbing attack at an outdoor shopping mall in Be'er Sheva carried out by an Islamic-State affiliated Israeli resident of the Bedouin town of Hura in the southern Negev region. The attacker was shot and killed by two armed civilians at the scene.

Following the attacks, Israel launched a series of counterterrorism crackdowns in the West Bank, dubbed Operation Breakwater.

04.30.22,

Mossad foils Iran assassin targeting Israel diplomat, US general & French journalist

04.30.22,

Mossad foils Iranian plot to assassinate Israeli diplomat in Turkey

Senior U.S. general and French journalist also reportedly targeted by Revolutionary Guards Corps in planned hitjob as Jerusalem mounts pressure on Washington to leave group's terror designation in place

Itamar Eichner | Published: 04.30.22, 14:26

The Mossad intelligence agency recently thwarted an Iranian assassination attempt on an employee of the Israeli Consulate in Istanbul, Israeli sources confirmed on Saturday.

According to London-based news channel Iran International, the elite Quds Force of Iran's powerful paramilitary Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) "has commissioned one of its agents to assassinate an Israeli employee of the country's consulate in Istanbul."

Citing diplomatic sources, the outlet said that the hitman was also supposed to target a senior U.S. general in Germany and a journalist in France.

The operative is reportedly a member of Quds Force's Unit 840 — a secretive unit in charge of planning and executing extraterritorial operations against Western and Iranian opposition targets. He is said to be held in an unnamed European country.

According to the report, the suspect confessed to having received \$150,000 for the preparations for the assassinations and would receive a further \$1 million once the hitjob is completed.

The report comes as negotiations between world powers and Tehran on reviving a deal to curb its nuclear program in exchange for sanction relief have been put on the back burner. Israel lately has been turning the screws on the Americans and other parties to the negotiations to not remove the IRGC from the U.S.'s Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) list.

Washington also voiced concerns over Tehran's ongoing creep toward attaining nuclear capabilities, with White House press secretary Jen Psaki warning on Tuesday that Iran could develop a nuclear weapon in weeks shortly after Secretary of State Antony Blinken noted the country has accelerated its nuclear program.

Following Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and U.S. President Joe Biden's phone call earlier in the week, Jerusalem believes Biden has decided to leave the IRGC's terrorist label in place much to Tehran's chagrin, making the chances of a new agreement being struck highly slim.

National Security Adviser Eyal Hulata visited Washington this week and spoke with his American counterparts. Israel is striving to reach maximum coordination with the United States in case talks collapse and Iran begins breaching past understandings. During the meetings, Israeli representatives presented proposals to levy additional U.S. sanctions to further strain Iran's struggling economy.

04.27.22

Hundreds in Mosque wave Hamas flags, hurl rocks & fireworks at West Wall crowd

04.27.22

Palestinians clash with Israeli police at Temple Mount in Jerusalem

Palestinians inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound began hurling stones and fireworks shortly after dawn in the direction of a heavily guarded gate that leads to the Western Wall, the holiest place where Jews can pray; The police advanced into the compound, firing rubber-coated bullets

Reuters, Ynet| Published: 04.29.22, 09:10

Israeli police fired rubber bullets and stun grenades towards rock-hurling Palestinian youth at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque on Friday, the latest outbreak of violence at a site revered by Muslims and Jews alike.

At least 12 Palestinians were injured in the early morning clashes at Islam's third-holiest site, the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Israeli police arrested at least two suspects for throwing rocks.

Israeli police said they intervened when hundreds of people began waving Hamas flags, and hurling rocks and fireworks, including in the direction of the Western Wall, where Jewish worshippers gather.

"We will continue to act decisively against rioters and outlaws for public safety and security," the police said in a statement.

The violence ended around an hour later after other Palestinians in the compound intervened, convincing the stone throwers and the police to pull back.

There were almost daily confrontations at the mosque this month when Ramadan overlapped with the Jewish celebration of Passover, which brought hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Jews to the heavily policed compound in the old city.

However, the violence had abated this week following the end of Passover and after Israel halted Jewish visits to the huge esplanade which is home to the gilded 7th-century Dome of the Rock and the 8th-century Al-Aqsa mosque.

Ramadan ends next week and the final Friday of the fasting month often sees especially large crowds gather at Al-Aqsa.

Israeli officials have blamed tensions this month on Islamist groups, including Hamas, which rules the Palestinian enclave Gaza, saying they have encouraged youths to stage riots aimed at stirring anger in the Muslim world against Israel.

Palestinians accused Israel of not doing enough to enforce a long-standing ban on Jewish prayer on the esplanade. Israel rejects this accusation.

04.27.22

Bennett convinced Biden; Iran is largest terrorist in the world & will have a bomb

04.27.22

White House worries Iran weeks away from bomb

Concerns of Iran's nuclear breakout time come as the Biden administration try to speed up the lagging nuclear talks in Vienna; Israel and the U.S. finally see eye to eye regarding the delisting of the IRGC

Itamar Eichner,Reuters| Published: 04.27.22, 11:42

The White House is worried Iran could develop a nuclear weapon in weeks, press secretary Jen Psaki said on Tuesday, after Secretary of State Antony Blinken noted earlier in the day the country has accelerated its nuclear program.

"Yes it definitely worries us," Psaki said, adding the time needed for Iran to produce a nuclear weapon is down from about a year to "just a few weeks or less."

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Iran's breakout time was "down to a matter of weeks."

The breakout period warned against by the U.S. secretaries refers to the amount of time it will take Iran to amass enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon.

Obtaining enough nuclear material for a bomb doesn't not equate to building the core of a nuclear weapon that could be detonated on Iran's enemies immediately- There are several other conditions and processes necessary for Iran to have a nuclear bomb ready.

"If we go back, under the Iran nuclear deal, Iran's nuclear program was tightly constrained," Psaki said, referring to the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers. "Since the Trump administration ceased US participation in the deal, Iran has rapidly accelerated its nuclear program.

"That is a direct impact of pulling out of the nuclear deal, making us less safe, giving us less visibility, and it's one of the reasons we pursued a diplomatic path again," she said.

The White House briefing took place in the background of ongoing talks in Vienna between Iran and world powers that have been moving at a slower pace than the Biden administration would have hoped. This context could be the source of the urgency in Psaki's statement, trying to sway other parties into speeding up the talks.

Due to the continuous stalling of the nuclear talks, Israel now believes that the U.S.' attempts to reach a nuclear deal with Iran are no longer feasible, largely because the U.S. no longer plans on delisting Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terror group, a move Israel strongly opposed from the beginning.

Psaki's statements follow the phone call between President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Sunday, in which the two leaders discussed "shared regional and

global security challenges, including the threat posed by Iran and its proxies", according to the White House readout of the conversation.

Also, in the midst of international efforts to revive the tattered nuclear agreement with Iran, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan met Monday with his Israeli counterpart, Eyal Hulata, "to discuss a range of regional and global security issues," including Israel's "concerns" about Iran, the White House said in a statement.

The two senior officials agreed to continue coordination through the U.S.-Israel Strategic Consultative Group "and strengthen security and diplomatic cooperation wherever possible with other regional partners."

While initially the two countries initially butted heads regarding the IRGC status as a terror group, Biden is now also refusing to accept Tehran's demand to delist the powerful paramilitary group, weakening the chances of a nuclear deal on the horizon.

"I am sure that President Biden, who is a true friend of Israel and cares about its security, will not allow the IRGC to be removed from the list of terrorist organizations. Israel has clarified its position on the issue: The IRGC is the largest terrorist organization in the world," Bennett was quoted as saying.

04.28.22

Ben Gurion Airport arrest Jerusalem residents smuggling 1,000 Dubai coins

04.28.22

Israel busts multi-million gold-smuggling operation from Dubai
East Jerusalem residents arrested with 1,000 coins on their person, concealed in specialized belly belts; Israeli authorities suspect detainees are part of a larger smuggling ring

Gad Lior | Published: 04.28.22, 12:09

Israel authorities on Wednesday arrested three residents of East Jerusalem at Ben Gurion Airport upon their return from Dubai on suspicion of trying to smuggle a thousand gold coins with an estimated worth in the millions.

The total weight of the coins was more than 8kg (17.6 lbs.), with a market value estimated at around NIS two million (\$605,000).

The coins were stashed in two specialized abdominal belts which two of the three passengers carried on their person.

The suspects were arrested as part of a joint operation of the Jerusalem Customs and VAT Investigations Department and the Ben Gurion Airport Drugs and Customs Unit, against a network of gold smugglers from Dubai.

Another East Jerusalem resident was arrested last month upon his return from Dubai, carrying one ounce of gold coins worth around NIS one million (\$302,000) on his body concealed in a belt similar to those seized by customs on Wednesday. Authorities suspect the suspects from both incidents are tied to the same smuggling ring.

The seized mints are 22-carat gold English sovereign coins. The sovereign is a gold coin of the United Kingdom that has a nominal value of one pound sterling.

Many of the variant designs of the sovereign since 1989 have been intended to appeal to coin collectors, as have the other gold coins based on the sovereign, from the quarter sovereign to the five-sovereign piece. As a legal tender coin, the sovereign is exempt from capital gains tax for UK residents. The value of each coin seized is estimated at 2,000 shekels (\$605).

04.27.22

US military bans soldiers from visiting Israel on leave; altered response to Covid

04.27.22

New U.S. rule bars soldiers from visiting Israel, region on leave

Changed rules implemented in September after Israel was officially reassigned to the AOR, says unofficial travel to Israel by CENTCOM members of the armed forces, is unauthorized, claiming COVID restrictions

i24NEWS| Updated: 04.27.22, 13:43

After Israel was reclassified to fall within the United States Central Command Area of Responsibility (AOR), the US military released updated guidelines banning service members from traveling to the region on leave.

The change, which affects Central Command Regulation 55-2, was implemented on September 8 of last year - one week after Israel was officially reassigned to the AOR.

The updated regulation rules that "unofficial travel into the US CENTCOM AOR is not authorized" - meaning Jewish service members looking to participate in cultural Birthright trips to Israel will be unable to travel as planned.

CENTCOM maintains that the updated guidelines were not prompted by Israel's new designation within the AOR.

CENTCOM's chief of media operations, Lt. Col. Karen Roxberry, informed ToI by email that the regulation was altered as part of the military's response to Covid considerations in the region.

"The changes... to Central Command Regulation (CCR) 55-2, were implemented in direct response to heightened Covid-19 restrictions throughout our area of responsibility," Roxberry said.

“Any correlation between the Defense Department’s announcement of Israel’s realignment to US Central Command’s responsibility in September 2021 is purely coincidental,” the official added.

04.27.22

Putin halted gas to Bulgaria and Poland; Dutch gas jumped 19% on Wednesday

04.27.22

Russia's Gazprom halts gas supplies to Poland and Bulgaria

UK Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab says move to further isolate Russia which is becoming 'not just a political pariah, but an economic pariah' as Bulgaria claims Moscow in violation of contract

Reuters| Published: 04.27.22, 10:08

Russian energy giant Gazprom on Wednesday halted gas supplies to Bulgaria and Poland for failing to pay for gas in roubles, the Kremlin's toughest response yet to the crippling sanctions imposed by the West over the conflict in Ukraine.

Poland and Bulgaria are the first countries to have their gas cut off by Europe's main supplier since Moscow started what it calls a special military operation in Ukraine on Feb. 24.

"Gazprom has completely suspended gas supplies to Bulgargaz (Bulgaria) and PGNiG (Poland) due to absence of payments in roubles," Gazprom said in a statement. Gazprom also warned that transit via Poland and Bulgaria would be cut if gas was taken illegally.

Russia's decision to cut off gas supply to Poland will add to its status as an economic and political pariah, British Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab said on Wednesday.

"It (halting gas supply) will have a ... very damaging effect on Russia as well because it is becoming further and further, more and more, not just a political pariah, but an economic pariah," Raab told Sky News.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered European countries to pay Gazprom, the world's biggest natural gas company, in roubles after what the West froze Russian assets and largely cut Moscow out of the West's economic system.

Putin has demanded that countries he terms "unfriendly" agree to a scheme under which they would open accounts at Gazprombank and make payments for Russian gas imports in euros or dollars that would be converted into roubles.

Poland has repeatedly said it will not pay for Russian gas in roubles and has planned not to extend its gas contract with Gazprom after it expires in the end of this year.

"Payments for gas supplied from April 1 must be made in roubles using the new payments details, about which the counterparties were informed in a timely manner," Gazprom said on Wednesday.

The benchmark Dutch front-month gas contract TRNLTTFMc1 at the TTF hub jumped by more than 19% on the day on Wednesday morning to 117 euros per megawatt hour.

04.26.22

Israeli ministers outraged at Bennett death threat letter from within Knesset

04.26.22

Israeli ministers outraged at death threats made against Bennett

Remembering the assassination of then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish radical, ministers warn incitement and hate speech can lead to murder; far-right legislator insinuates threatening letter is fraudulent

Liran Levi | Updated: 04.26.22, 22:34

Members of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's coalition voiced outrage on Tuesday, after a death threat was made against the prime minister and his family.

The threats were made in a letter, which contained a live bullet, sent to a member of the Bennett family who resides in the family home in Ra'anana, and not addressed to him directly.

Security around the Bennett and around members of his family was increased as authorities chose to take the threats seriously as they attempted to identify those behind the ominous letter.

Bennett and members of his Yamina party had been slammed by right-wing politicians and activists for forming a coalition with parties from the left and the Islamist Ra'am party.

They have accused the prime minister of lacking the legitimacy to rule after his party received only six Knesset seats in the last elections and by forming a government had prevented an additional term under former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

A gag order has been imposed on all information pertaining to the investigation which is conducted by the special crimes unit of the police and the security services.

Bennett's long time political partner, Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked, who herself was haggled by right-wing protesters and provided special security at the order of the Knesset, said the threat against the prime minister and his family was shocking.

"It is inconceivable that in a Jewish country, its leader will face a danger from within. The police will find whom ever lifted a hand against Israeli democracy and bring him to justice," she said.

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said the threats made were a sad reminder of how far incitement can lead.

"We will fight the hate speech in the streets, online and everywhere," Lapid said. "They will not scare us. The extremists will not prevail over the sane majority," he said.

Defense Minister Benny Gantz said threats made against the prime minister's family cross the line and that incitement and violence have resulted in political murders in the past.

"One bullet in a letter can become three fired from a pistol," Gantz said. "I trust the police and security services to apprehend those responsible for the death threat. Even in times of difficult disagreements, we must all remember our strength is in our unity," he said.

In a post on Instagram, Bennett's 16-year old son Yoni wrote he was sad that real people write such terrible things.

"It is so sad that things like this happen because of incitement and people's brains are fried by others who deserve to sit in jail for brainwashing other people," Yoni wrote.

Bennett said in response that political disagreements, no matter how deep, should not turn violent. "We must do everything to make sure that does not happen," he said.

"We are all human beings and can have arguments and disagreements but not bullying and threats. I am a prime minister and a politician but I am also a father and husband and my duty is to protect my wife and children. We must tone the discourse down," he said.

"I call on everyone from all sides of the political spectrum - now is the time for calm and appeasement," Bennett said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Religion Minister Matan Kahana, a member of Bennett's Yamina party on Monday said he had received a call wishing him dead.

"You garbage bin, I wish that Arabs slaughter you and that your children are left orphaned, you stinking Nazi," the caller said.

Kahana said that Israel has already discovered that words can kill, referring to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by a right-wing extremist in 1995.

Far-right leader of the Religious Zionist Party, Bezalel Smotrich questioned whether the letter was real.

"I wonder whether publicizing this investigation is not a spin meant to improve Bennett's standing in the public and to delegitimize the right and its protests against the prime minister," he said.

"I do know that violence must always be out of bounds but the days in which the right is silenced by accusations of incitement are over," he said.

There are crazy people on both sides of the political spectrum and it is the job of law enforcement and the security services to prevent violence, but that does not apply to political criticism over the terrible things Bennett and his partners have done and are doing," he said.

"We will continue to oppose violence and criticize the government in our efforts to remove it," he said.

Netanyahu's son Yair, who has been outspoken in his contempt of Bennett on social media, also retweeted posts doubting the authenticity of the death threat.

04.26.22

IDF says PA willing to 'sacrifice themselves' fired Lebanon rocket

04.26.22

Senior IDF commander says Palestinians behind Lebanon rocket fire

Major General Amir Baram, says Palestinian trying to drag Lebanon into escalating violence gripping Israel; Hezbollah's leader says the Palestinian Issue is gaining supporters willing to 'sacrifice themselves for its cause'

Yoav Zeitun, Liad Osmo | Published: 04.26.22, 21:14

The head of the IDF northern command - Major General Amir Baram said on Tuesday that the rocket fired from Lebanon earlier in the week, came from Palestinian terrorists.

"Palestinian terrorist from Lebanon tried to ignite another arena," Baram said in a speech at a ceremony in northern Israel.

"Only less than 48 hours ago we came across a Palestinian terror attempt to violate our daily routine, from Lebanon. In response to one rocket that landed in Israel but caused no damage, the IDF fired over 50 rounds of artillery shells into Lebanese territory," he said. "Certain parties wanted to ignite another arena and disrupt the civilians' routine. We won't allow this. The north is now back to its own routine and we'll keep it that way," he said.

"We are in complicated days, a convergence of the spring holidays and Easter together with the month of Ramadan, creates tension which is taken advantage of by Palestinian terrorists, who try to drag Lebanon into the violence. We hold the Lebanese government and Lebanese army as those responsible for this."

Baram reminded the neighbor to the north, of the consequences of attacking Israel. "In previous attempts, he said addressing the Iran backed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, "you made mistakes and acted from Lebanese territory against Israel, you paid a heavy price and essentially took Lebanon decades back in time," he said.

"In two days Hezbollah will mark the Iranian Quds Day - an event that is observed by Iran and its different proxies. Every year, Nasrallah commemorates the day with arrogance and animosity, but it is important to remember that even for this 'holiday' Hezbollah's leader will not dare leave his bunker where he has lived for years," Baram told the listening troops.

"Nasrallah threats from his hiding place in a bunker in the Dahieh [in southern Beirut], are the best proof of his understanding that he and his organization have no future," he said.

"This year Nasrallah will also threaten and make accusations at us, the Israelis, but will not suggest a thing; certainly not progress or prosperity for his community or for Lebanon that is struggling to reach a positive social and economic position."

Meanwhile, Nasrallah in a speech on Tuesday said clashes at the Al Aqsa compound in Jerusalem show the Palestinian issue is back in full force, and "gaining supporters who are willing to sacrifice themselves for its cause."

"The enemy expected nations to forget the Palestinians as time went by, but what's happening is the opposite," he said.

Nasrallah spoke of the resistance, centering in Jerusalem, and said that "its returning today and with it the sword in Gaza that defends it like it did last year."

A rocket was fired from Lebanon into Israel in the beginning of the week, and landed in open space near the northern town Shlomi. Two hours later, the IDF retaliated by targeting the sources of the rocket launch in southern Lebanon with artillery forces.

The IDF Spokesperson Unit announced that no terror organization claimed responsibility for the attack, but after evaluation it seems that Palestinian parties in Lebanon were behind it, as a response to the clashes in the Temple Mount. It's also possible, according to sources within the security system, that satellites of Hamas in Lebanon were responsible for the rocket attack.

04.26.22

Israel aids in 40 NATO countries at German Ramstein Air Base, arming Ukraine

04.26.22

Israel takes part in talks on arming Ukraine, for the first time

Defense Ministry official participates in meeting held at U.S. Ramstein Air Base in Germany, hosted by Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, with 40 nations including all NATO member states

Itamar Eichner, Reuters | Published: 04.26.22, 19:03

Israel openly takes part in the international defense conference on Tuesday taking place in Germany, discussing the arming of the Ukrainians amid the war.

The talks, hosting more than 40 NATO member countries, were being held by U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in the American Ramstein Air Base in southwestern Germany.

Israel's representative in the conference is Dror Shalom, head of political-security division of the Defense Ministry.

Last week was Israel's first statement of militarily standing behind Ukraine, as it provided vests and helmets to the Ukrainian rescue forces and civilian organizations, still steering clear of direct aid to the battling country's army.

This is after Israel received criticism from Ukraine and the international community for its lack of straightforward signs of condemnation of the Russian invasion and of Ukrainian support.

At the beginning of the conference, secretary Austin said nations from around the world stand united and resolved to support Ukraine in its fight against "Russia's imperial aggression."

"Ukraine clearly believes that it can win, and so does everyone here," Austin said.

Britain promised to provide the Ukrainians with military vehicles and is considering providing Poland with tanks so that more could be passed over to Ukraine. Germany also announced on Tuesday that it intends to provide Ukraine with anti-aircraft tanks.

On Monday, Austin visited President Zelensky along with Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Zelensky had previously listed the weapons Ukraine is in need of, including an anti-missile defense systems, armed vehicles, and tanks.

The U.S. representatives pledged to grant Ukraine \$713 million of additional military aid, including more advanced weaponry. This extension brings the sum of U.S. funds towards Ukraine's war efforts since the invasion up to \$3.7 billion.

In a notable shift, Germany, where the government had come under pressure after refusing Ukrainian pleas for heavy weapons, announced it would now send "Gepard" light tanks with anti-aircraft guns.

"The real significance of this decision lies not in the difference Gepards may make on the battlefield, but in the signal it sends," said Marcel Dirsus, non-resident fellow at Kiel University's Institute for Security Policy.

Amongst other central the international players that attended the conference, Japan and Australia expressed concern regarding the consequences the Russian victory could have on China's ventures to take over territories sees as controversial in their sovereignty.

Sweden and Finland, which plan to request to become members of NATO within the next month, also attended the defense conference in Germany.

During the talks, U.S. Army General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, cautioned that Ukraine needed more security assistance to help it defend against an unfolding and potentially decisive Russian onslaught in the east. He said the coming weeks were "critical."

"Time is not on Ukraine's side," Milley said during closed-door remarks provided to reporters traveling with him. "The outcome of this battle, right here, today, is dependent on the people in this room."

Milley added: "The Ukrainians will fight. We need to make sure they have the means to fight."

04.26.22

Russia last hope to scare the world warns nuclear war risks now considerable

04.26.22

Russia warns nuclear war risks now 'considerable'

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov tells state TV although he doesn't want to 'elevate' risks of WWII 'artificially,' he danger of one starting is 'real'; his Ukraine's counterpart says he regarded Russia's scaremongering as a sign of weakness
Reuters| Published: 04.26.22, 09:12

Russia's foreign minister told the world not to underestimate the considerable risks of nuclear conflict, and NATO's supply of weapons to Ukraine "in essence" meant that the Western alliance was engaged in a proxy war with Russia.

Interviewed by Russian state television, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was asked about the importance of avoiding World War Three and whether the current situation was comparable to the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

"The risks now are considerable," Lavrov said according to a transcript of the interview on the ministry's website.

"I would not want to elevate those risks artificially. Many would like that. The danger is serious, real. And we must not underestimate it."

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said he regarded Russia's scaremongering as a sign of weakness.

Russia had lost its "last hope to scare the world off supporting Ukraine," Kuleba wrote on Twitter after Lavrov's interview. "This only means Moscow senses defeat."

During a visit to Kyiv on Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin promised more military aid for Ukraine.

The U.S. State Department on Monday used an emergency declaration to approve the potential sale of \$165 million worth of ammunition to Ukraine. The Pentagon said the package could include artillery ammunition for howitzers, tanks and grenade launchers.

Moscow's ambassador to Washington told the United States to halt shipments, warning Western weapons were inflaming the conflict.

Lavrov said: "NATO, in essence, is engaged in a war with Russia through a proxy and is arming that proxy. War means war."

Russia's two-month-old invasion of Ukraine, the biggest attack on a European state since 1945, has left thousands dead or injured, reduced towns and cities to rubble, and forced over 5 million people to flee abroad.

Moscow calls its actions a "special operation" to disarm Ukraine and protect it from fascists. Ukraine and the West says this a false pretext for an unprovoked war of aggression by President Vladimir Putin.

The United States is due to host an expected gathering of more than 40 countries this week for Ukraine-related defense talks that will focus on arming Kyiv, U.S. officials said.

Britain said all tariffs on goods coming into the country from Ukraine under an existing free trade deal will be axed and it would send new ambulances, fire engines, medical supplies and funding for health experts to help the emergency services.

Russia's foreign ministry said on Monday that it had declared 40 German diplomatic staff "personae non gratae" in a retaliatory move after Berlin expelled the same number of Russian diplomats.

WAR RAGES IN SOUTH, EAST

Russia has yet to capture any of the biggest cities. Its forces were forced to pull back from the outskirts of Kyiv in the face of stiff resistance.

"It is obvious that every day - and especially today, when the third month of our resistance has begun - that everyone in Ukraine is concerned with peace, about when it will all be over," President Volodymyr Zelensky said late on Monday.

"There is no simple answer to that at this time."

Having failed to take the capital Kyiv, Moscow last week launched a massive assault in an attempt to capture eastern provinces known as the Donbas, which if successful would link territory held by pro-Russian separatists in the east with the Crimea region that Moscow annexed in 2014.

Ukraine's general staff said on Tuesday that Russia's offensive continued in the eastern Kharkiv region with Russian forces trying to advance towards Zavody.

Russia's defense ministry earlier said its missiles destroyed six facilities powering the railways that were used to deliver foreign weapons to Ukrainian forces in the Donbas region.

The head of Ukraine's state rail company said that one railway worker had been killed and four injured by Russian missile strikes on five Ukrainian railway stations on Monday. Ukrainian forces have repelled five Russian attacks and killed just over 200 Russian servicemen, said the Ukrainian military command in the southern and eastern sectors. Five tanks were also destroyed, along with eight armored vehicles, it said in a statement.

Russia is probably attempting to encircle heavily fortified Ukrainian positions in the country's east, the British military said in an update on Tuesday.

Reports say the city of Kreminna has fallen, with heavy fighting in the south of the city of Iziurm, as Russian forces try to advance towards the cities of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, Britain's defense ministry said on Twitter.

The governor of Russia's Belgorod province, Vyacheslav Gladkov, said Ukraine had fired on two villages, and at least two people were wounded. Reuters was unable to verify the Ukrainian or Russian reports.

Russian forces were continuing on Monday to bomb and shell the vast Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol where fighters are hunkered down in a city ravaged by a siege and bombardment, Ukrainian presidential aide Oleksiy Arestovych said.

Moscow said it was opening a humanitarian corridor to let civilians out of the plant but Kyiv said no agreement had been reached.

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Ynet-News, Apr 26, 2022 – Tuesday

04.26.22 – Tu- - - News Placed in Apr 26 spot – Tuesday

Knesset vote prevents Chikli from deserting PM's party during this session

04.26.22 – Tu- - - News Placed in Apr 25 spot – Monday
Nuclear talks may crumble as US will not remove Iran from terrorist blacklist

04.26.22 – Tu- - - News Placed in Apr 24 spot – Sunday
Israel thwarts massive weapon smuggling 100 grenades+ from Lebanon

04.25.22 – Mo- - - News
Israel to reopen Gaza crossing after closing it over rockets

04.25.22 – Mo- - - News Placed in Apr 23 spot – Saturday
Eight-Parties trying to keep coalition afloat with 60 seats & ongoing unrest

04.25.22 – Mo- - - News
Israel says it thwarted bomb attack by terrorists from Jenin

04.22.22 – Fr- - - News
Two rockets into southern Israel from Gaza hit near UN school facility

04.22.22 – Fr- - - News Placed in Apr 22 spot – Friday
PA rioters clash with Israeli police on Temple Mount; 57 injured