

Ynet-News, June 12, 2022 – Monday

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Iran assassination of high-rank officers in recent weeks, link to leaked information

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06.12.22

Iran assassination of high-rank officers in recent weeks, link to leaked information

06.12.22

Israel, Turkey foil Iranian plot against Israeli targets

Announcement comes two weeks after Israel issued a travel warning to the Muslim country; 'Things are really heating up there,' says official, confirming rise in number of attempts by Iran to carry out attacks

Itamar Eichner | Published: 06.12.22, 18:22

Israeli and Turkish intelligence services recently foiled an Iranian plot to attack Israeli targets on Turkish soil, senior Israeli officials told Ynet on Sunday.

"Things are really heating up there," one official said, confirming there had been a recent rise in Iran's attempts to carry out attacks.

The successful joint operation of Turkey's intelligence agencies MIT comes less than two weeks after Israel's National Security Council issued a severe travel warning urging Israelis to avoid traveling to the country and several other destinations bordering Iran, for fearing Iranian revenge for the assassination of high-ranking Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) officer Col. Hassan Sayad Khodaei that was attributed to Israel. The Prime Minister's Office said at the time there was a credible threat to the safety of Israelis and urged extra caution when traveling to those destinations.

Several high-profile deaths have struck the Islamic Republic in recent weeks. According to Iran International, a Saudi-funded news agency tied to Iran's opposition, one of the recently the officials who were killed recently was aeronautics expert Ayoub Entezari who was poisoned at a dinner to which he was invited. Entezari was reportedly linked to Tehran's military drone enterprise, among other projects.

Tehran tried to present the slain scientist as a rank-in-file worker for a private company, but in a recently surfaced video, Entezari can be seen with then-Iranian president Hassan Rouhani during a visit to a facility in the city of Yazd.

Meanwhile, smaller media outlets in Iran also reported the death of Kamran Malapour, an Iranian nuclear scientist who worked at the Natanz facility which has been hit in the past by several blasts that were also attributed to Israel.

The death of the two scientists was not reported by official Iranian media, but the timing of the incidents has sparked a wide interest.

Col. Ali Esmaelzadeh, a senior member of the Quds Force Unit 840 of the IRGC, has also died under unclear circumstances. According to Iran International, Esmaelzadeh fell to his death from the roof of his home in northern Iran.

According to the report, the IRGC informed his family that he had committed suicide, leaving a letter behind. The website cited sources who claimed that the IRGC was behind Esmaelzadeh's death after suspicion arose that he had leaked information that led to the assassination of Khodaei. Iran has denied the allegations.

06.12.22

Cabinet unanimous on West Bank bill, Knesset vote tabled before end of June

06.12.22

Israeli government okays divisive West Bank bill ahead of second Knesset vote  
PM says opposition opts to sow chaos when out of power; justice minister says bill to be tabled for new Knesset vote after coalition partners get in line to support it  
Itamar Eichner, Gilad Cohen, Tova Zimukil | Published: 06.12.22, 15:21

Less than one week after the governing coalition failed to pass legislation extending Israel's authority over the West Bank settlements, the cabinet on Sunday unanimously approved the bill, announcing it would be tabled for an additional Knesset vote.

During the weekly meeting, cabinet ministers also discussed repercussions should the legislation fail to pass yet again, although Justice Minister Gideon Saar said the bill will be tabled in the Knesset at an appropriate time.

"It is critical that this law is passed before the end of June," Saar said. "We will resubmit it for a vote when we are satisfied that all coalition members have done their bit to ensure its success," he said.

Saar told ministers that without the legislation, police stations in the West Bank will be severed from the rest of the force and criminals will use the area to escape the law.

"People fail to understand the implications," he said.

He also told ministers that settlers will lose basic civil rights including adoption rights, inheritance rights, motor vehicle licenses, and more including some professions becoming off limits to settlers, he will no longer be considered equal under the Israeli law.

Deputy Attorney General Raz Nazri said chaos would be an "understatement," should the bill fail to pass before it expires. "We will not have the authority to detain 3,000 security prisoners now held in the West Bank," he said.

When asked by Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked if residents of the area will lose their government stipends, he said, "Come July 1, national security stipends might be problematic. There are ways around the problem, such as depending on the military's assistance, but I would not count on that option too much," he said.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett slammed the right-wing opposition for voting against the legislation in last week's vote.

"There is a group of legislators who say they will sow chaos if they are not in charge," Bennett said. "One man is walking around with a jug of oil to burn down the entire forest. There has never been such behavior from any opposition," he said, calling on his ministers to articulate the same to the media.

But the vote did not only fail because of the opposition. Last week's legislative failure came after Arab members of the coalition also voted against the bill, while were absent from the plenum.

Meretz lawmaker Ghaida Rinawi-Zoabi said on Twitter on Sunday that she has no intention of compromising and supporting the bill she had vehemently opposed before. Her and Ra'am legislator Mazen Ghana'im, have both come under pressure to resign from the Knesset if they are unable to support the coalition. Both have thus far refused.

06.12.22

Abbas Office of PA Affairs (OPA) reports to Assistant Secretary of State Barbara Leaf

06.12.22

Palestinian president hosts U.S. delegation ahead of Biden visit

Abbas and U.S. Near Eastern Affairs official discuss delisting the PLO from the US terrorist entities, reopening the Palestinian consulate for east Jerusalem and more

AFP| Updated: 06.12.22, 08:55

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas hosted on Saturday a US delegation led by Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf, ahead of an expected visit of President Joe Biden.

Abbas reiterated his requests to remove the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from the US list of terrorist entities during the meeting, his office said.

The Palestinian president also requested that the PLO's office in Washington and the American consulate for east Jerusalem be reopened, after both were closed under the Trump administration, the Palestinian presidency said in a statement.

Leaf, who began a three-day trip to the Palestinian territories and Israel on Saturday, met Abbas "to discuss the US-Palestinian relationship, US assistance to Palestinians, deepening ties + how Palestinians and Israelis alike deserve equal measures of freedom, security & prosperity," the State Department said.

Biden has pledged to reopen the consulate, closed under Donald Trump, whose administration recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, infuriating the Palestinians who see its eastern sector as their future capital.

Israel opposes the Palestinian consulate in Jerusalem, saying the US should open this diplomatic mission in Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian Authority in the occupied West Bank.

Meanwhile, the US has in recent days changed the title of its Palestinian Affairs Unit to Office of Palestinian Affairs (OPA), without defining it a consulate.

The unit "operates under the auspices of the US Embassy in Jerusalem, and reports on substantive matters directly to the" State Department, an OPA spokesperson said, noting the new structuring was "to strengthen our diplomatic reporting and public diplomacy engagement".

The move comes ahead of a possible visit of Biden to the region. The US president saying he was considering a trip to Saudi Arabia, Israel and the Palestinian territories in July.

06.09.22

Biden upgrades ties, with US Office of Palestinian Affairs in Jerusalem

06.09.22

U.S. rolls back Trump rule on relations with Palestinians

Biden administration upgrades ties with Palestinians, who no longer need to go through U.S. ambassador in Israel to deal with State Department; former U.S. envoy calls move 'interim step toward reestablishing a consulate in Jerusalem'

Associated Press| Published: 06.09.22, 20:09

The Biden administration announced on Thursday it is restoring a line of communication for the Palestinians that had been canceled by former President Donald Trump.

The move, announced ahead of a possible visit by President Joe Biden to Israel and the West Bank, means Palestinians will deal directly with the State Department in Washington rather than go through the U.S. ambassador in Israel first.

Reflecting the change, the former Palestinian Affairs Unit changed its name Thursday to the U.S. Office of Palestinian Affairs.

In a statement, the newly renamed office said the move was meant to "strengthen our diplomatic reporting and public diplomacy engagement."

"We felt that it was important to reintroduce separate reporting lines to Washington on Israeli and Palestinian issues, by our respective teams on the ground that focus on these issues," it said, adding that it was reinstating a system that was in place for decades before Trump's cancellation.

The decision falls short of the Palestinian demand that the United States reopen its Jerusalem consulate, which for years functioned as a de facto embassy to the Palestinians.

There was no immediate reaction from the Palestinians or Israel.

The Trump administration shuttered the consulate, in one of a series of controversial moves that favored Israel over the Palestinians.

Under Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken pledged to reopen it, a move that Israel said would challenge its sovereignty over the city.

It was thought that such a reopening could help mend U.S. ties with the Palestinians, ruptured under Trump. The U.S. has so far failed to reopen the consulate, apparently in fear of upsetting ties with Israel or destabilizing its fragile coalition government.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said there was no room in Jerusalem for another American mission.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry said it views the reopening of the consulate as part of the international community's commitments to ending what it calls "Israel's decades-long occupation" of territories the Palestinians seek for their future state.

Dan Shapiro, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel who is now a distinguished fellow with the Atlantic Council, called Thursday's move "an interim step by the Biden administration toward reestablishing a consulate in Jerusalem."

06.09.22

UN watchdog in Vienna tense, as Iran pulls 27 cameras leaving 40

06.09.22

UN nuclear watchdog: Iran removing 27 surveillance cameras

Rafael Grossi says move can be fatal blow to negotiations over Iran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers; adds sites slotted for camera removal include underground Natanz nuclear enrichment facility

Associated Press| Published: 06.09.22, 15:34

The head of the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog agency said Thursday that Iran is removing 27 surveillance cameras from nuclear sites in the country, raising the risk of its inspectors being unable to track Tehran's advances as it enriches closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

Rafael Mariano Grossi, the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, made the comments at a suddenly called news conference in Vienna, standing next to an example of the cameras installed across Iran.

Grossi said the move poses a "serious challenge" to its efforts, warning that in three to four weeks, it would be unable to maintain a "continuity of knowledge" about Iran's program.

"This would be a fatal blow" to negotiations over Iran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers, Grossi said.

"When we lose this, then it's anybody's guess," he added.

Iran did not immediately acknowledge it was removing the cameras.

Grossi said that would leave "40-something" cameras still in Iran. The sites that would see cameras removed include its underground Natanz nuclear enrichment facility, as well as its facility in Isfahan, Grossi said.

"We are in a very tense situation with the negotiations over the (nuclear deal) at a low ebb," Grossi added. "Now we are adding this to the picture; as you can see it's not a very nice one."

On Wednesday, Iran said it shut off two devices the IAEA uses to monitor enrichment at Natanz. Grossi acknowledged that, saying that among the devices being removed was a crucial meter that tracks how high Iran is enriching uranium at Natanz.

Iranian officials had threatened Wednesday to take more steps amid a years-long crisis that threatens to widen into further attacks.

That came ahead of a vote before the IAEA's board censuring Iran over what the agency calls Iran's failure to provide "credible information" over man-made nuclear material found at three undeclared sites in the country.

The IAEA earlier Thursday said Grossi told members that Iran informed the agency that it planned to install two new cascades of the IR-6 at Natanz. A cascade is a series of centrifuges hooked together to rapidly spin uranium gas to enrich it.

An IR-6 centrifuge spins uranium 10 times as fast as the first-generation centrifuges that Iran was once limited to under its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. As of February, Iran already had been spinning a cascade of IR-6s at its underground facility at Fordo, according to the IAEA.

At Natanz, located some 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of the capital, Tehran, Iran earlier said it planned to install one cascade of IR-6s. The IAEA said it "verified" the ongoing installation of that cascade Monday, while the newly promised two new cascades had yet to begin.

Iran and world powers agreed in 2015 to the nuclear deal, which saw Tehran drastically limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. In 2018, then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord, raising tensions across the wider Middle East and sparking a series of attacks and incidents.

Talks in Vienna over Iran's tattered nuclear deal have been stalled since April. Since the deals collapse, Iran runs advanced centrifuges and has a rapidly growing stockpile of enriched uranium.

Nonproliferation experts warn Iran has enriched enough up to 60% purity. a short technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90, to make one nuclear weapon should it decide to do so.

Iran insists its program is for peaceful purposes, though U.N. experts and Western intelligence agencies say Iran had an organized military nuclear program through 2003. Building a nuclear bomb would still take Iran more time if it pursued a weapon, analysts say, though they warn **Tehran's advances** make the program more **dangerous**. **Israel** has **threatened** in the past that it would carry out a **preemptive strike** to stop Iran and already is suspected in a series of recent killings **targeting Iranian officials**. **Iran** already has been holding footage from IAEA surveillance **cameras** since February 2021 as a pressure **tactic to restore the atomic accord**.

**06.11.22**

**IDF strike Damascus Airport runway, terminal building & three arms depots**

**06.11.22**

**Syria: 'significant' damage to airport from Israeli strike**

**Syrian Transportation Ministry says Friday's raid, allegedly conducted by IDF, damaged the runway 'in several locations,' and also hit the airport's second terminal building**  
APnews| Published: **06.11.22**, 13:30

An Israeli airstrike that struck **Damascus International Airport** caused **"significant" damage to infrastructure** and **rendered the main runway unserviceable** until further notice, Syria said Saturday.

The statement by the Transportation Ministry was the first detailing the extent of damage from **Friday's airstrike**. Syrian media reported earlier that **Syria suspended all flights** to and from the airport and the ministry confirmed all flights were suspended because **"some technical equipment stopped functioning at the airport."**

**Israel's** military has **declined to comment** on the airstrike.

Saturday's statement said the runway had been damaged "in several locations" and that the strike also hit the airport's second terminal building.

"As a result of these damages, incoming and outgoing flights through the airport were suspended until further notice," it said.

The **airport** is located **south of the capital Damascus** where Syrian opposition activists say **Iran-backed militiamen are active and have arms depots**.

Israel has for years carried out strikes in the area, including one on May 21 that resulted in a fire near the airport leading to the postponement of two flights. This was the **first time** an **airstrike caused** damage leading to the **suspension of flights** at the airport.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said the Friday morning Israeli **strike hit three arms depots for Iran-backed militiamen** inside the airport, adding that the **northern runway at** the facility was damaged, as was the **observation tower**.

The Observatory added that the northern runway was the only one functioning after Israeli strikes last year badly damaged the other runway, known as the southern runway.

Israel has staged hundreds of strikes on targets in Syria over the years but rarely acknowledges or discusses such operations. It says it targets bases of Iran-allied militias, such as Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group. Hezbollah has fighters deployed in Syria fighting on the side of Syrian President Bashar Assad's government forces and ships arms believed to be bound for the militias.

The Syrian Transportation Ministry statement said civil aviation cadres and specialized units were working to remove debris and repair damage and that operations will resume as soon as flight safety can be ensured.

06.09.22

Hezbollah chief Nasrallah warned aggressive action can stop Israel gas extraction

06.09.22

Hezbollah chief says can stop Israeli gas extraction from disputed field

Nasrallah says Lebanese terror group 'not afraid of war' if Israel goes ahead with offshore gas production; Jerusalem rejects Lebanon's claims amid protracted maritime border dispute

Reuters, Ynet | Published: 06.09.22, 23:33

The head of Lebanese terrorist group Hezbollah said on Thursday that his group could stop Israel from extracting gas from a maritime field that Beirut says lies in disputed waters, adding Hezbollah is "not afraid of war."

Lebanon warned Israel on Sunday against any "aggressive action" in disputed waters where both states hope to develop offshore energy after a vessel operated by London-based Energean arrived off the coast to produce gas for Israel.

Hezbollah "has the capacity to prevent the enemy from beginning to extract from Karish, and all the enemy's actions will not be able to protect this ship," Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah said in a televised speech.

Nasrallah said that "the Greek company," referring to Energean, "is a partner in this attack on Lebanon," for which it will face "consequences."

Energean was not immediately available for comment.

Energean has said that its floating production storage and offloading vessel is due to start production at Karish in the third quarter.

Israel says that the field in question, which is about 80 km (50 miles) west of the city of Haifa, is within its exclusive economic zone, not in disputed waters.

The United States began mediating indirect talks between the sides in 2000 to settle a long-running dispute that has obstructed energy exploration in the eastern Mediterranean.

Lebanon has yet to respond to an undisclosed proposal a U.S. envoy made early this year to revive the stalled talks.

Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Berri said on Tuesday that U.S. mediator Amos Hochstein will visit Beirut early next week but Washington has said there are no travel plans to announce yet.

Senior Israeli Cabinet ministers on Wednesday urged Lebanon to settle the dust on the long-standing maritime border dispute.

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, Defense Minister Benny Gantz and Energy Minister Karine Elharrar published an open letter stating they considered the Karish gas field a strategic asset that Israel is prepared to defend.

"The rig is located in Israeli territory, kilometers south of the area that is being negotiated between Israel and Lebanon, under U.S. mediation. The rig will not draw gas from the disputed area," they wrote.

06.09.22

Bennett arrives in UAE for talks with leaders on Iran after IAEA vote

06.09.22

Bennett arrives in UAE for talks with leaders on Iran and more  
Prime minister says visit bolsters bond forming between Israel and UAE in fields of security and prosperity; visit which comes a day after IAEA vote on resolution criticizing Iran over uranium traces at undeclared sites  
Itamar Eichner | Published: 06.09.22, 12:49

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett arrived in the UAE on Thursday for talks with President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and other senior officials.

"Today we will build another level onto the special bond forming between our nations, for the security and prosperity of both peoples," Bennett said.

The visit comes after the UN's Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Wednesday, overwhelmingly passed a resolution criticizing Iran for failing to explain uranium traces found at three undeclared sites.

Israel hailed a resolution by the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

"This is a significant resolution that exposes Iran's true face," Bennett said after the vote.

The visit also comes after the mysterious deaths in Iran of senior scientists.

Bennett told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Tuesday, that his government's strategy on Iran has changed.

" The days of Iran having immunity when it strikes against Israel and spreads its terrorism via proxies, are gone. We are operating everywhere and all the time, and will continue to do so," he said.

According to media reports, IAEA officials told member states that Iran has begun installing advanced IR-6 centrifuges in a cluster at an underground enrichment plant in line with a longstanding plan and now intends to add two more such clusters, or cascades.

06.09.22

MK Shaked, Hirsch, and police will closely monitor Arab funds in monthly stipends

06.09.22

In midst of coalition crisis, Shaked decides to monitor Arab council budgets  
Interior minister appoints a team to track funding allocated to Arab sector in an attempt to ensure money goes towards communities' development and civilian welfare, rather than to criminal elements

Itamar Eichner | Published: 06.09.22, 11:07

Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked said Thursday she decided to closely monitor budgets provided to Israeli Arab councils despite the danger the move may pose to the ramshackle government coalition.

The monitoring mechanisms will apply to routine funds allocated to the sector as well as money intended for councils' development. According to Shaked the decision was made in an effort to make sure criminal elements - which are prevalent in the Arab sector - don't get hold of the funds.

Israel's latest five-year plan meant to boost socioeconomic development of Arab communities, allots about 700 million NIS to the sector for projects that deal with welfare, transportation, healthcare, education and more.

As the coalition is hanging by a thread, however, Shaked's close supervision of the funds is bound to aggravate Arab politicians who are already on edge.

On Monday, heads of Arab parties in the government and in the opposition refused to okay the law on the legal status of settlers in the West Bank, which was tabled by the coalition.

Shaked's decision will effectively transfer all of Interior Ministry's tenders on development of infrastructure from Arab local authorities to national mechanisms. The monitoring mechanism will be under the authority of Interior Ministry Director-General Yair Hirsch, and several other representatives of the attorney general. More so, a pool of contractors that are eligible to apply for the development tenders will be approved by the police.

Shaked's outline will also see the funds allocated for the Arab communities' welfare purposes monitored by the Interior Ministry, and money will no longer be transferred all at once, but rather in monthly stipends.

A local authority looking to receive a grant will have to go through the Interior Ministry's monitoring mechanisms and prove that it intends to invest the budget in substantial projects. Additionally, the authorities will be required to prove that the field the grants had been invested in were improved.

"This isn't a punishment for anyone," said an Interior Ministry official. "The Arab councils are part of the local authorities of Israel and we want to develop them. Until today, however, the development budgets haven't reached their intended targets, and we want to make sure that they do."

06.08.22

Netanyahu courts MK Orbach from PM's party to join Likud next week

06.08.22

Netanyahu in talks to court MK from PM's party in bid to end government

Nir Orbach reportedly offered a spot in Netanyahu's Likud party in case of an election, or a senior position within the party's institutions if he is barred from running for Knesset under an existing parliamentary framework

Moran Azulay | Published: 06.08.22, 23:27

Opposition Leader Benjamin Netanyahu has been holding talks with a member of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's Yamina party to convince him to defect and bring about the collapse of the governing coalition, Ynet has learned on Wednesday.

Nir Orbach, a conservative lawmaker who has long been considered a weak link in a governing coalition that features left-wing and Arab parties, has been reportedly offered a spot in Netanyahu's Likud party in case of an election or alternatively, a senior salaried position within the party's institutions if he is sanctioned by Yamina and is barred from running for Knesset under an existing parliamentary framework like fellow Yamina MK Amichai Chikli.

Sources familiar with the talks told Ynet that although Orbach remains loyal to the current coalition, he believes that its days in its current composition are numbered. According to the sources, Netanyahu gave Orbach an ultimatum until next week.

This comes just days after the pro-settlements legislator was seen snapping at fellow coalition lawmaker MK Mazen Ghanaim of the Islamist Ra'am party who broke party discipline to defeat the renewal of a bill extending legal protections to Jewish West Bank settlers.

After the bill was defeated on Monday, an incensed Orbach was seen approaching Ghanaim before being pulled back by ushers as he yelled at the Arab lawmaker "the experiment with you has failed."

Likud activists who spoke with Orbach recently got the impression that his patience with the government has run out, despite being a long-time running mate of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and fellow Yamina member Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked. Orbach had even been appointed secretary-general of the Jewish Home party by the duo before splintering off to form Yamina.

Orbach was highly hesitant about entering the coalition, but ultimately decided to remain loyal to his political alliance. However, it now appears he intends to dissolve the partnership with the prime minister and interior minister.

Orbach declined Ynet's request for comment.

06.08.22

Settler leader says Netanyahu and allies 'spitting on West Bank settlers'

06.08.22

Settler leader says Netanyahu and allies 'spitting on West Bank settlers'

Yesha Council chairman accuses conservative opposition lawmakers of harming Jewish settlers amid controversy over renewal of settler law; colleague claims whole issue is a spin

Alexandra Lukash| Published: 06.08.22, 18:21

A prominent settler leader on Wednesday slammed Opposition Leader Benjamin Netanyahu and members of his conservative parliamentary bloc for their refusal to back a bill on the legal status of Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

David Elhayani, chairman of the Yesha Council — an umbrella organization of municipal councils of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, said he believed the bill was too important to be used by the opposition as leverage to bring the government down.

"We're talking about a bill that must be kept out of political bickering," Elhayani told Ynet in an interview. "Ideology means little to Likud members."

Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War but has never officially annexed the territory. Emergency regulations in place for decades apply parts of Israeli law to Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

These regulations expire at the end of the month and if they are not renewed, that legal system will be thrown into question. It could also change the legal status of the 500,000 settlers living there.

Elhayani is a member of the right-wing New Hope party, led by Justice Minister Gideon Sa'ar, who also sponsored the bill that failed in Knesset. Sa'ar publicly stated that he will consider the governing coalition illegitimate if the bill falls through.

However, some settler leaders consider the move to be a spin on behalf of the former Likud lawmaker to better his standing ahead of a potential election and wish to see the current government collapse and be replaced by a conservative one.

"I don't agree with them," Elhayani said. "It's important to stress that most settler leaders in the West Bank called on the opposition to support the legislation, there are four leaders who oppose it.

"There are right-wing opposition lawmakers who levy heavy pressure on settler leaders to abandon the principles on which they were elected because our job is to provide our residents with high quality of life. The Likud's appeals cause them to betray their position."

The Yesha chairman further said that if the bill is not renewed in time, half a million Jewish settlers are headed toward chaos.

"I don't see a way to convince Likud," he said. "They harm the settlements to advance their political interests and those of Netanyahu. I think that if there's someone who betrayed the trust of their constituents, it's Likud and Religious Zionist Party that are spitting on their West Bank settler voter base.

"About 70% of West Bank settlers voted for the right, it's totally okay if many of them want to replace the government. This bill must be left out of political bickering and it has nothing to do with the fact I support Gideon Sa'ar... I need to look out solely for my people's interests without any other political considerations. This has nothing to do with whether I support or don't support the coalition, I'm talking about our quality of life and the fact that if this law doesn't pass we'll be in chaos."

Meanwhile, Shai Alon, head of the settlement Beit El in the central West Bank, thinks otherwise.

"This government needs to go down... We disagree on saving this coalition that can't function and fails to pass legislation every other day, making it rely on the opposition. It's high time we put an end to this."

Unlike Elhayani, Alon thinks failing to pass the bill wouldn't have a significant effect on settlers' everyday life.

"No one has ever heard of this law," he said. "This is a campaign started by Gideon Sa'ar. His polling is abysmal so he sends Elhayani with a script. Sa'ar forgot about the settlements for an entire year but now he wants to stay afloat so he's piggybacking West Bank voters. If he thinks this coalition has no right to exist, go ahead then, you failed, go home!"

We look out for our people's future year-round. It's malarkey, they took the most esoteric matter and turned it into an election campaign for Gideon Sa'ar."

06.08.22

Abbas says Bennett coalition unites Arab & Zionist, if it fails, Lapid will be PM

06.08.22

Ra'am's Abbas says Bennett's coalition unites opposing sides of political spectrum  
Leader of Islamist party leader says Israeli government not only unites Arab party with Zionist ones, but also brings together members from the Left and the Right while succeeding to decide policy  
Ynet| Published: 06.08.22, 12:10

Leader of the Islamist Ra'am party, Mansour Abbas, said Wednesday the coalition of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett was a successful experiment that has brought together opposing sides of the political spectrum.

"We formed a very special government," Abbas said during a conference at Reichman University.

"Our challenge is to bring stability to the political system and continue as part of the coalition and the government," he said.

"Although I've heard a member of Bennett's party say that the experiment failed, but I believe he was wrong."

Bennett ally and member of the Yamina party spoke of the failure of the experiment immediately after the opposition blocked government legislation to renew regulations that extend Israeli law to the West Bank settlements.

"The government is special not only because it includes an Arab party along side Zionist ones, but also because it is able to operate and reach agreements on all sectors of Israeli society including the Arabs, with parties on the left and on the right," he said.

"Our parties are able to work together although individual members are struggling to do so," Abbas said.

Mazen Ghanaim, a member of Ra'am was one of two Arab coalition legislators who joined the opposition to foil the bill.

After the former coalition whip Yamina member of Knesset Idit Silman announced she was moving her support to the opposition in April, the coalition had lost its parliamentary majority and had been struggling to advance its legislations.

According to the coalition agreement on which the government is based, should the government fall, the leader of the caretaker cabinet will be from the opposing side. Had the government fallen because Arab legislators blocked legislation with the help of the right-wing opposition, Bennett would head the caretaker government but if a right-wing member of the coalition causes it to fall, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid will take the reigns and be prime minister until a new government is formed.

06.08.22

Syrian and Russian aircraft conduct joint drill at night along the Golan Heights

06.08.22

## Syrian and Russian air forces conduct joint drill over Syria

First time since Russia invasion of Ukraine, two Russian SU-35 fighter jets and six Syrian MiG-23 and MiG-29 aircraft simulate facing 'hostile' warplanes and drones, comes hours after missile strike on Damascus

Associated Press | Published: 06.08.22, 08:06

The air forces of Russia and Syria conducted a joint drill over the war-torn country Tuesday, the first since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began more than three months ago, Syria's Defense Ministry said.

The ministry said two Russian SU-35 fighter jets and six Syrian MiG-23 and MiG-29 aircraft simulated facing "hostile" warplanes and drones. Syrian pilots dealt with them with cover and support from the Russian warplanes, it said.

"All illusive targets were monitored and completely destroyed while aerial targets were hit at night for the first time," the Syrian Defense Ministry said in a statement. It also released a video of the warplanes that it said took part in the drill.

The announcement came hours after Syrian state television reported that Israeli missiles targeted Syrian army positions south of the capital of Damascus, causing material damage but no casualties.

State TV quoted an unnamed military official as saying that Israeli warplanes fired several missiles while flying over the Golan Heights before midnight Monday. It added that Syrian air defenses shot down most of the missiles.

There was no comment on the strike from Israel.

According to Syrian state media, Israeli missiles targeted central Syria on May 13, killing five people including a civilian, and igniting fires on farmland in the area.

Russia became involved militarily in Syria in September 2015 helping to tip the balance of power in favor of President Bashar Assad's forces in the 11-year conflict that has killed half a million people.

The Syrian Defense Ministry said that during Tuesday's drill, the Russian and Syrian warplanes carried out joint patrols along the Golan Heights and other parts of southern Syria.

The last such joint drill was conducted a week before Russia began its invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24. In mid-February, the Russian military deployed long-range nuclear-capable bombers and fighter jets carrying state-of-the-art hypersonic missiles to Syria for massive naval drills in the Mediterranean Sea.

Israel has staged hundreds of strikes on targets in Syria over the years but rarely acknowledges or discusses such operations.

It says it targets bases of Iran-allied militias, such as Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group that has fighters deployed in Syria and fighting on the side of Assad's government forces, as well as arms shipments believed to be bound for the militias.

06.08.22

Iran disabled 2 UN nuclear watchdog cameras monitoring levels & flowmeters

06.08.22

Iran turns off 2 of UN nuclear watchdog's cameras  
move disabling camera at uranium enrichment in nuclear site seen as pressure tactic  
ahead of IAEA vote on Iranian violations of nuclear agreement and lies to UN agency  
AP, Ynet | Published: 06.08.22, 15:07

Iran turned off two surveillance cameras of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog that monitored one of its atomic sites, state television reported Wednesday.

The report did not identify the site, but it appeared to be a new pressure technique by Tehran as Western nations seek to censure Iran at a meeting this week of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Iranian state television report described the two cameras as monitoring "OLEM enrichment levels and flowmeters." That appeared to refer to the IAEA's Online Enrichment Monitors, which watch the enrichment of uranium gas through piping at enrichment facilities.

Iran currently is enriching at both its Fordo and Natanz underground nuclear sites.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has so far had extensive cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency," state TV said in its report. "Unfortunately, the agency, without considering this cooperation ... not only did not appreciate this cooperation, but also considered it as a duty of Iran."

Tehran said its civilian nuclear arm, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, monitored the shutdown of the cameras. It said 80% of the existing cameras are IAEA "safeguard" cameras and they will continue to operate as before.

Iran and world powers agreed in 2015 to the nuclear deal, which saw Tehran drastically limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. In 2018, then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord, raising tensions across the wider Middle East and sparking a series of attacks and incidents. The Vienna-based IAEA declined to immediately comment.

Iran already has been holding footage from IAEA surveillance cameras since February 2021 as a pressure tactic to restore the atomic accord.

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Talks in Vienna over Iran's tattered nuclear deal have been stalled since April. Since the deal's collapse, Iran runs advanced centrifuges and has a rapidly growing stockpile of

enriched uranium. Nonproliferation experts warn Iran has enriched enough up to 60% purity - a short technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90% - to make one nuclear weapon if it choose.

Iran insists its program is for peaceful purposes, though United Nations experts and Western intelligence agencies say Iran had an organized military nuclear program through 2003.

Building a nuclear bomb would still take Iran more time if it pursued a weapon, analysts say, though they warn Tehran's advances make the program more dangerous. Israel has threatened in the past it will carry out a preemptive strike to stop Iran - and already is **suspected in a series of recent killings targeting Iranian officials.**

"The past year has seen a strategic change in Israeli policy on Iran", Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said during a session of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense committee on Monday.

"Israel is operating against the many tentacles of Iranian terror, not only as it has done in past decades. The days of Iran having immunity when it strikes against Israel and spreads its terrorism via proxies, are gone. We are operating everywhere and all the time, and will continue to do so," he said.

"In recent years **Iran has crossed red lines**, especially **last April**, months before this government came to power, when it began **enriching uranium to 60%** with **no international response**," the prime minister said. **"Israel cannot and will not accept** such a situation."

Bennett added: "We expect the IAEA Board of Governors will issue a clear warning sign before the regime in Tehran and make clear that if they continue their defiant nuclear policy, they will pay a heavy price."

**06.07.22**

**UN biased report in Geneva next week rebukes Israel for control of PA**

**06.07.22**

**UN-mandated rights inquiry rebukes Israel for seeking 'complete control'**

Investigators commissioned by **Human Rights Council** say **tensions** between Palestinians and Israelis are underpinned by **Israel's 'occupation'** of Palestinian areas; Foreign Affairs Ministry calls **report 'biased**, tainted with hatred **for State of Israel'**

Reuters| Published: **06.07.22**, 17:54

An independent commission of **inquiry** set up by the **UN human rights** body after the 2021 Gaza war said **Israel must do more** than end the occupation of land Palestinians want for a state, according to a report released on Tuesday.

Foreign Affairs Ministry called the report "a waste of money and effort" that amounted to a witch hunt. Israel boycotted the inquiry, accusing it of bias and barred entry to its investigators.

While prompted by the 11-day May 2021 conflict in which 250 Gaza Palestinians and 13 people in Israel died, the UN Human Rights Council inquiry mandate includes alleged human rights abuses before and after that and seeks to investigate the "root causes" of the tensions.

It cites evidence saying Israel has "no intention of ending the occupation" and is pursuing "complete control" over what it calls the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which was annexed by Israel in a 1967 war.

"Ending the occupation alone will not be sufficient," the report says, urging additional action to ensure the equal enjoyment of human rights.

Citing an Israeli law denying naturalization to Palestinians married to Israelis, the report accuses the country of affording "different civil status, rights and legal protection" for Arab minorities. Israel says such measures safeguard national security and the country's Jewish character.

The ministry added: "It is a biased and one-sided report tainted with hatred for the State of Israel and based on a long series of previous one-sided and biased reports."

Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but, with the help of Egypt, clamps down on the borders of the enclave now governed by Hamas Islamists. Palestinian authorities have limited self-rule in the West Bank, which is dotted with Israeli settlements. Hamas, which is sworn to Israel's destruction, opened the May 2021 war with rocket attacks following moves to evict Palestinian families in East Jerusalem, and in retaliation for Israeli police clashes with Palestinians near the al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site.

The Gaza fighting was accompanied by rare street violence within Israel between Jewish and Arab citizens.

The report will be discussed at the Geneva-based Human Rights Council next week. The body cannot make legally binding decisions.

The United States quit the Council in 2018 over what it described as its "chronic bias" against Israel and only fully rejoined this year.

Unusually, the three-member commission of inquiry (India, South Africa and Australia) has an open-ended mandate. A diplomat said that its mandate was already a sensitive issue. "People don't like the idea of perpetuity," he said.

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Theory in Shavuot Thursday evening June 9 to Thursday evening June 16  
Traditional Shavuot Friday evening June 3 to Friday evening June 10

06.07.22 – Tu- - - News

Ukraine envoy says his country needs Iron Dome; Israel 'not supportive enough'

06.07.22 – Tu- - - News

New strategy on Iran & Gaza threats; Israel will not allow them to amass strength

06.07.22 – Tu- - - News

Syria intercepted several Israeli missiles in Damascus hostile target strike

06.07.22 – Tu- - - News Placed in June 07 spot – Tuesday

IAEA governors to vote on Iran to impose UN world powers security sanctions

06.06.22 – Mo- - - News

Israel 1967 West Bank Settlements law expires June 30, if it fails 2nd vote

06.06.22 – Mo- - - News

Knesset convened Monday to vote on regulating West Bank settlements

06.06.22 – Mo- - - News

Hezbollah ready if Lebanon & US mediator says Israel violating water rights

06.06.22 – Mo- - - News

West Bank PA protest hike in prices & prepare strike on unpaid May salaries

06.06.22 – Mo- - - News Placed in June 06 spot – Monday

Legal status of West Bank may place PA & settlers under Military & Courts

06.05.22 – Su- - - News

Huffy US Congresswoman argues Israel visa discriminates entry into West Bank

06.05.22 – Su- - - News Placed in June 05 spot – Sunday

Lebanon warns gas ship activity 50 miles west of Haifa, in UN disputed waters

06.05.22 – Su- - - News

Police lock PA in mosque, throwing stones & furniture, as Jews visit compound

06.05.22 – Su- - - News Placed in June 05 spot – Sunday

WB PA lost flocks until vaccinated by Israel; land vacated 3-years can be settled

06.04.22 – Sa- - - News

Biden moves Israel, Saudi Arabia visits to July, after Germany & Spain this month

06.05.22 – Su- - - News

Russia strikes railway network in Ukraine's capital Kyiv on 100th day of war