

Ynet-News, January 03, 2023 – Tuesday

1.03.23 – Tu- - - News Placed in January 03 spot – Tuesday  
US, France, Britain, Jordan, Saudi, PA & UAE condemn Ben-Gvir Temple Mount visit

1.03.23 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday  
Stolen equipment, field fires, theft of crops & lack of resolve cost farmers millions

1.03.23 – Tu- - - News Placed in January 03 spot – Tuesday  
Jews Must Leave Russia or Face Persecution, Warns Exiled Moscow Chief Rabbi

1.01.23 – Su- - - News Placed in January 01 spot – Sunday  
Jews, Ukraine and Bella Hadid: Our top 10 most read stories of 2022

1.01.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday  
'Our local Tuscany': New Israeli government vows to develop West Bank tourism

1.01.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday  
Egypt urges caution for Netanyahu government that could inflame regional tensions

1.01.23 – Su- - - News Placed in December 30 spot – Friday  
Hundreds of thousands gather in Gaza to celebrate Fatah & ponder vote

12.31.22 – Sa- - - News Placed in December 31 spot – Saturday  
PA asks UN Court for opinion on Israel occupation; 87 against Israel, US & 24

12.30.22 – Fr- - - News – Friday  
Concerns; civil rights, Syria-Iran, rising prices, another intifada, converting Jews

1.03.23  
US, France, Britain, Jordan, Saudi, PA & UAE condemn Ben-Gvir Temple Mount visit

1.03.23  
U.S. Embassy dubs Ben-Gvir's Temple Mount visit 'unacceptable'  
Ambassador Tom Nides slams far-right lawmaker's visit, saying U.S. position on preserving the status quo in Jerusalem was made clear to government; Turkey becomes latest country to condemn Ben-Gvir's 'provocative act'  
Ynet|07:34

The U.S. Embassy in Israel on Tuesday condemned the visit by far-right minister Itamar Ben-Gvir to Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

"Ambassador Nides has been very clear in conversations with the Israeli government on the issue of preserving the status quo in Jerusalem's holy sites. Actions that prevent that are unacceptable," the embassy said in a statement.

The strong message was delivered early on Tuesday, before the White House or State Department could weigh in on the visit.

But, in his congratulatory message to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu upon the formation of his new government, President Joe Biden said the U.S. remained in full support of the two-state solution and that the administration would oppose anything that would endanger it.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a similar statement to incoming Foreign Minister Eli Cohen when the two spoke on Monday.

Since the makeup of Netanyahu's coalition became clear after the November ballot, U.S. officials have voiced their concern that the extremists in the government could compromise the cooperation between Washington and Jerusalem and that the strong alliance between the nations was based on mutual values, among other considerations.

"We will gauge the government by the policies and procedures, rather than individual personalities," Blinken said during the J Street conference in Washington last month. Ben-Gvir intended to enter the mosque compound on Monday, but following a meeting with the prime minister, said he would postpone his visit to a later date. Netanyahu claimed that he never told Ben-Gvir to refrain from the provocative visit, and only asked that it be coordinated with security agencies.

The visit was condemned by the Palestinian Authority, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, among others.

Turkey was the latest Muslim state to issue a condemnation. "We are concerned by the provocative act of Israeli Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir towards Al-Aqsa Mosque under the protection of Israeli police and we condemn it," the Turkish foreign ministry said in a statement.

"We call on Israel to act responsibly to prevent such provocations that will violate the status and sanctity of holy places in Jerusalem and escalate tension in the region," it said. France and Britain also issued condemnations.

1.03.23

Stolen equipment, field fires, theft of crops & lack of resolve cost farmers millions

1.03.23

Criminals cost Israeli farmers millions in damages in 2022

Border Police commander calls for reinforcements to respond to incidents, while private security group says 39% of agricultural crimes go unreported

The Media Line | Yesterday | 15:05

Criminals caused millions of dollars in damages to Israeli farmers over the course of 2022, preliminary data from the HaShomer HaChadash organization shows.

Stolen tractors, entire wheat fields set on fire and theft of crops and produce are just some of the many agricultural crimes plaguing Israel's farmers.

Overall, there were 186 agricultural crimes reported by HaShomer HaChadash last year, which is slated to publish its latest report in the coming weeks. Of those, 108 filed an official complaint with police. In total, the incidents account for an estimated \$3.78 million in damages.

Most of the crimes took place in the Negev, Galilee and Jordan Valley regions. "In Israel, farmers are suffering from at least \$25,000 damage each on average every year," Yoel Zilberman, founder and CEO of HaShomer HaChadash, told The Media Line. "It means that someone comes and steals what they grow. Many times, it's ATV trucks and other types of equipment that are getting stolen."

The stated goal of the HaShomer HaChadash organization is to safeguard Israel's lands and raise awareness about agricultural crime. Beyond a belief in Zionist ideals, Zilberman says that the organization is apolitical and includes Jewish, Christian and Muslim volunteers from all walks of life among its ranks.

According to Israel's Border Police and data published by the State Comptroller's Office in 2017, most agricultural crimes are perpetrated by organized crime groups, with many originating in the Palestinian Authority.

"In many places, the idea is to push the farmer to abandon their land," Zilberman said. "Some are [doing so] from a mafia point of view, others for nationalistic reasons. It's something that farmers all over the Negev and Galilee are suffering from."

HaShomer HaChadash's 2021 Crime Report, which was published earlier last year, showed that farmers experienced 6.6 criminal incidents each on average over that year. The survey included 412 respondents from all over the country, both Jewish and Arab. The most common crime was petty theft, followed by vandalism. The cattle, sheep and goat industry suffered the most damage in 2021, amounting to 23 crimes per farmer annually on average.

"The farmers in Israel are a small group of people who are in charge of the country's food security," Zilberman said. "It doesn't matter – Jewish, Muslim or Christian – they are feeding the people of Israel. In many [cases], those whose crops are getting damaged are not Jews, they are Arabs. There are at least 25,000 Palestinians that come to work in Israel in agriculture every year."

Roughly 39% of farmers did not report criminal incidents to the police, the report said, noting that many respondents cited a lack of trust or confidence in the authorities to effectively resolve the issue.

Border Police Commander Eli Gozlan, who is involved in intelligence and investigations, told The Media Line that 2022 saw a decrease in "reported crimes" overall.

“This year we’ve seen a 23% decrease in reported incidents,” Gozlan said. “Underreporting is a very complicated issue.”

The issue of agricultural crimes going unreported is not unique to Israel and also occurs in other countries, Gozlan noted. One of the reasons for this is that it is exceedingly difficult to nab the perpetrators of such crimes and cases are therefore closed fairly quickly without resolution.

Because of this, farmers are generally more reluctant to lodge a complaint with police.

“We are trying very hard to strengthen farmers’ trust in us,” Gozlan said, adding that he thinks that the process of investigating agricultural crimes is cumbersome and lengthy and that those found guilty should be forced to pay fines quickly.

One of primary challenges is that the Border Police simply does not have enough officers to cover such a wide territory.

“In the past year and a half or two, we’ve increased our manpower and established units in rural areas made up of volunteers and reserves in order to respond to farmers,” Gozlan said. “At the same time, it’s not enough because we’re unable to reach every place. Rural areas make up 85% of Israel’s land. To be able to get to these places we need significantly more police officers, means and capabilities. So, what we have is not enough.”

Zilberman echoed those sentiments, and noted that the HaShomer HaChadash is lobbying the government to double the police force as well as boost recruitment efforts. The organization also is pushing for lawmakers to increase investments in the agricultural sector and educate the public about the importance of farming for Israel’s national security.

The story is written by Maya Margit and reprinted with permission from The Media Line

1.03.23

Jews Must Leave Russia or Face Persecution, Warns Exiled Moscow Chief Rabbi

1.03.23

Jews Must Leave Russia or Will Face Persecution, Warns Exiled Moscow Chief Rabbi

By All Israel News Staff | Tuesday, 03 January 2023 08:01 AM EST

Former chief rabbi of Moscow Pinchas Goldschmidt warned on Friday that Russian Jews should leave Russia or they will face markedly rising antisemitism.

“When we look back over Russian history, whenever the political system was in danger, you saw the government trying to redirect the anger and discontent of the masses towards the Jewish community,” Goldschmidt told The Guardian. “We saw this in tsarist times and at the end of the Stalinist regime.”

“We’re seeing rising antisemitism, while Russia is going back to a new kind of Soviet Union, and step by step, the iron curtain is coming down again. This is why I believe the best option for Russian Jews is to leave.”

The Zürich-born Goldschmidt, who served as Moscow's chief rabbi from 1993 until 2022, left Russia in March after refusing to accommodate a request from Russian state officials to publicly support Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"Pressure was put on community leaders to support the war and I refused to do so. I resigned because to continue as chief rabbi of Moscow would be a problem for the community because of the repressive measures taken against dissidents," Goldschmidt said.

According to Goldschmidt, 25 to 30% of Russia's 165,000 Jews already left since the war on Ukraine began, or are planning to leave Russia. It is estimated that around 200,000 Russians in all left the country, which is home to 143 million people.

"There's a section of Russian society called the 'creacle,' the creative class of business and cultural leaders, intellectuals and artists," Goldschmidt said, "and I think it's safe to say a great percentage of those people have left Russia, which is and will be very detrimental to Russian society."

It is not the first time that Goldschmidt has warned Russian Jews to flee the country. He did so only a few months ago, in October, after assistant secretary of the Russian Security Council Aleksey Pavlov called the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidic movement a supremacist cult.

"The main principle of the Lubavitch Hasidim is the superiority of the supporters of the sect over all nations and peoples," Pavlov wrote.

Pavlov's comments, in addition to Russia's threats to close the Jewish Agency in the country, prompted Goldschmidt to call on Russian Jews to leave.

"An attack by the Russian government against Chabad, as well as the attacks against the Jewish Agency for Israel, are antisemitic acts against all of us," Goldschmidt said. "We reiterate our call to all of our brothers and sisters still remaining in Russia and able to leave the country to do so."

Most of Russia's rabbis are Lubavitch, including Pinchas Goldschmidt, himself, and Chief Rabbi of Russia Berel Lazar, who remains in the country. The same is the case in all the countries of the former Soviet Union where Jews live today.

The many decades under Communist Soviet rule virtually extinguished all Jewish life in the region and it was Chabad, mainly, which helped rebuild it after the fall of Communism.

Pavlov's comments created much fear throughout Russian Jewish communities, which recall Soviet and tsarist rule, when antisemitism was state policy.

"There's a huge difference between antisemitism and antisemitism that's a policy of the state. For the past few decades, we've gotten used to this not being the case, that this was stricken from the political map in Russia, that there's no official anti-Semitism or discrimination against Jews," spokesperson for the Russian Jewish community, Baruch Gorin, told the Israeli Public Broadcasting Corporation at the time.

"Now we are under pressure, wondering if what was published in the newspaper – this interview with a top security official – represents the start of an official wave of antisemitism," Gorin said. "I think that would be the end of a Jewish presence in Russia. Official antisemitism would drive every Russian Jew out of the country." This article originally appeared on ALL ISRAEL NEWS and is reposted with permission.

1.01.23

Jews, Ukraine and Bella Hadid: Our top 10 most read stories of 2022

1.01.23

Jews, Ukraine and Bella Hadid: Our top 10 most read stories of 2022

As 2023 ushers in, Ynetnews takes a look at what you were reading - from Volodymyr Zelensky's statements on Israel to antisemitism and even 2022 France's World Cup star Kylian Mbappé

Yulia Karra | 15:31

The past year has been quite the mixed bag. On the one hand, the world has truly reopened, having hunkered down for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the other, it bore witness to an all-out war on the European soil for the first time since World War II, when Russia launched its onslaught of its southern neighbor. Ukraine leader Volodymyr Zelensky, who is also part Jewish, rose to international prominence due to his seemingly unshakable confidence throughout the military campaign, which has entered its eleventh month.

In Israel, domestic stories also dominated the headlines, with the promised political unity failing to materialize, sending the country into its fifth election campaign in less than three years, while antisemitism has begun to rear its ugly head all over the world. These are the 10 stories that most captivated Ynetnews readers in 2022:

1. How did American Jews get so rich?

Recent data suggests antisemitic incidents have seen a dramatic increase over the past year. A report released by the Wiesenthal Center just this week claims that rapper Kanye West, known as Ye, has contributed greatly to the disturbing trend with his recent outbursts, repeating the disturbing antisemitic tropes, such as Jewish people "run the media" and "control the banks."

It is not surprising that one of the most read stories on Ynetnews this year was a 2011 analysis on how Jews have become one of the richest religious groups in American society.

## 2. Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner spotted wining and dining in Tel Aviv

In June of 2022, the senior adviser to former U.S. president Donald Trump and his wife and daughter of the Republican leader arrived in Israel for a brief visit. During their outing to Tel Aviv's beachfront Manta Ray restaurant, the pair was greeted by a swarm of paparazzi.

Ivanka's security guards tried to obstruct the lensmen's work with pieces of cardboard they had brought with them in advance, but the daughter of former U.S. president surprisingly instructed them to let the paparazzi get the coveted snaps.

## 3. French soccer star Mbappé dating Israeli Instagram model

French soccer superstar Kylian Mbappé has been the talk of the town following recent 2022 FIFA World Cup, with France reaching the final and losing to Argentina in a very close match.

Back in May, the player made the headlines in Israel as well, when reports had emerged that he was dating an Instagram model Aviv Meiri, a 29-year-old student from the affluent Israeli town of Meitar.

Although sources said Meiri at one point flew to Paris to spend quality time with the athlete, the romance appears to have withered. Latest reports say the 24-year-old Paris Saint-Germain forward is dating Stephanie Rose Bertram, a 28-year-old Belgian model.

## 4. Putin to officially declare war on Ukraine

Russian President Vladimir Putin stunned the world when he launched a massive military campaign against Ukraine on February 24. Refusing to call the campaign "war" for months, sources said the Russian leader would officially do so on May 9, when Russia marks "Victory Day" over the Nazi Germany.

## 5. Putin demands ownership of Jerusalem landmark in angry letter to Bennett

At the onset of the war, Israel had taken a tough stance on Russia, voting at the UN to condemn the invasion and calling the onslaught that killed thousands of people unacceptable.

Russia did not keep Israel waiting when it came to response. In April, Russian Putin demanded in a letter to former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, that the Alexander Nevsky Church, in the Old City of Jerusalem, be immediately transferred into Russian hands, after it was allegedly promised to him by Benjamin Netanyahu.

## 6. Babi Yar memorial said to be undamaged by Russian missile strike

In the first few days of the war in Ukraine reports had emerged that Russian forces shelled an area in Kyiv next to Babi Yar - the site of a World War II massacre of tens of thousands of Jews by German occupation troops and Ukrainian auxiliaries.

In an exclusive report, Ynet journalist Ron Ben-Yishai was able to reach the area and verify that the memorial, in fact, was neither damaged nor shelled.

#### 7. Zelensky says Ukraine will become 'big Israel'

In an interview with Ukrainian journalists in April, Zelensky asserted that following the invasion, Ukraine will become similar to Israel, with security being its main concern for decades to come.

#### 8. A sneak peek into tennis star Djokovic's high living in Tel Aviv

In September, one of the greatest tennis players of all time Novak Djokovic landed in Israel to play the 2022 Tel Aviv Open. However, the accommodation of the Serbian superstar in the Holy Land is what truly had the tongues of the local public wagging. Djokovic was reported to have been staying in the presidential suite of the luxurious Royal Beach Hotel on Tel Aviv's Yarkon Street - priced at whopping NIS 7,867 (\$2,200) per night.

#### 9. Israelis spotted next to suspected Istanbul bomber before blast

In November, the Turkish city of Istanbul was rocked by a bombing attack in the middle of one of its tourism hotspots. At least eight people were killed and over 80 wounded when the bomb exploded at Istiklal Street near the Taksim Square in the city. Fortunately, no Israeli nationals were harmed in the attack, but at least two had a very lucky escape. Security camera footage from the area of the blast later revealed two Israeli women walking alongside the suspected terrorist who was en route to place the bomb.

#### 10. Bella Hadid claims to have lost jobs over anti-Israel stance

We are rounding up our Top 10 with a figure who is known all too well to Israeli readers. Model Bella Hadid is famously an ardent critic of Israel. Hadid, who has over 50 million Instagram followers, is the daughter of Mohamed Hadid, a Palestinian businessman born in Nazareth, who immigrated to the United States. During 2021 war in Gaza, dubbed Operation Guardians of the Wall, the model shared an infographic, labeling Israel "a group of colonizers," who are perpetrating ethnic cleansing against Palestinians. She also took part in a pro-Palestinian rally in May of 2021, and was caught on camera shouting the slogan "from the river to the sea," used by terror groups as a rallying call to destroy the Jewish state.

In August, she claimed in an interview that her criticism of Israel has cost her jobs. Did that actually happen? Our guess is as good as yours.

#### 1.01.23

'Our local Tuscany': New Israeli government vows to develop West Bank tourism

#### 1.01.23

'Our local Tuscany': New Israeli government vows to develop West Bank tourism



Freshly sworn-in Tourism Minister Haim Katz promises his office will 'invest in areas that may not have received sufficient support to date,' while his coalition partners vow to make settlement construction 'top priority'

The Associated Press|11:36

The tourism minister of Israel's new hardline government on Sunday promised to invest in developing the West Bank, calling the area "our local Tuscany."

Haim Katz made the comments days after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new government took office, promising in its coalition guidelines to make West Bank settlement construction a top priority. His coalition includes far-right settler leaders in top posts.

Israel's new Tourism Minister, Haim Katz, speaks at the exchange ceremony on Sunday

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war and has built dozens of settlements that are now home to roughly 500,000 Israelis.

The Palestinians claim the entire area as part of a future independent state and consider the settlements illegal, a position that is widely shared by the international community. Israel's commitment to deepening its control of the West Bank has threatened to put it on a collision course with some of its closest allies.

At a ceremony Sunday, Katz said he would channel resources to promote tourism in the West Bank. "We will invest in areas that may not have received sufficient support to date," he said. "For example, our local Tuscany in Judea and Samaria," he added, using the biblical term for the West Bank favored by religious and right-wing Israelis.

The West Bank settler community has developed a small tourism sector that includes hotels, bed and breakfasts and wineries. Israel considers these industries to be part of the country's broader tourism sector, while international human rights groups have said they deepen control of occupied territory.

Airbnb in 2018 said it would bar listings in the Israeli settlements, but it quickly backed down under heavy Israeli pressure. Last year, Booking.com said it was adding warnings to its listings there.

On Friday, the U.N. General Assembly asked the U.N.'s highest judicial body to give its opinion on the legality of Israeli policies in the occupied West Bank.

Netanyahu called the resolution "disgraceful" and said Israel is not obligated to cooperate with the International Court of Justice.

1.01.23

Egypt urges caution for Netanyahu government that could inflame regional tensions

1.01.23

Egypt's leader urges caution for Netanyahu's new government

According to a statement from the Egyptian leader's office, el-Sissi congratulated Netanyahu on returning to power, but warned that provocative acts 'could lead to a tense situation and complicate the regional scene'

The Associated Press|12:47

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi on Sunday urged Israel's new hardline government to refrain from "any measures" that could inflame regional tensions, in a phone call congratulating Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on his return to office.

The leaders spoke days after Netanyahu's new Cabinet was sworn in, promising in its coalition guidelines to make settlement construction in the West Bank a top priority.

According to a statement from the Egyptian leader's office, el-Sissi cautioned Netanyahu to avoid "any measures that could lead to a tense situation and complicate the regional scene."

El-Sissi also said his government would continue its efforts to "maintain calm" between Israel and the Palestinians, the statement added.

Netanyahu's office said the two leaders discussed Egyptian-Israel ties and stressed "the importance of promoting peace, stability and security for the sake of both peoples and for all peoples in the Middle East."

Netanyahu returned to power Thursday for an unprecedented sixth term as Israel's premier, taking the helm of the most right-wing and religiously conservative government in the country's 74-year history.

Jewish settlement expansion in the West Bank could increase already worsening tensions between Israel and the Palestinians and upset the international community. Most of the world considers settlements built on territories sought by the Palestinians to be illegal and obstacles to peace.

Egypt and Israel reached a historic peace accord in 1979. Relations have generally been cool between the countries, though behind-the-scenes security cooperation remains strong. There have been growing signs of overall cooperation in recent years.

In 2021, then-Prime Minister Naftali Bennett met with el-Sissi in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, in the first official visit to Egypt by an Israeli prime minister in over a decade.

The two Middle Eastern countries also signed a deal with the EU in June to increase liquefied natural gas sales to European countries that aims to reduce their dependence on supplies from Russia amid the war in Ukraine.

Egypt has also for years served as a key mediator between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas. The bitter enemies have fought four wars since Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip in 2007, most recently an 11-day conflict in May. Egypt has been working quietly to arrange a long-term truce.

1.01.23

Hundreds of thousands gather in Gaza to celebrate Fatah & ponder vote

1.01.23

Hundreds of thousands gather in Gaza City to celebrate Fatah's anniversary. Hamas allows celebration to take place despite its longstanding feud with Fatah and failed attempts to reconcile.

Jan 1, 2023, 3:42 AM (GMT+2)

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs celebrated in a Gaza City park on Saturday to mark the 58th anniversary of the founding of the Fatah organization, The Associated Press reported.

The crowds turned Katiba Park into a sea of yellow flags and pictures of Fatah founders and leaders, including Palestinian Authority (PA) chairman Mahmoud Abbas and his predecessor Yasser Arafat.

It was a rare show of popularity for Fatah in the heartland of Gaza, which is controlled by Fatah's main rival, Hamas.

Hamas and Fatah have been at odds since 2007, when Hamas violently took control of Gaza in a bloody coup. Hamas permitted Fatah to hold Saturday's rally, though in several past occasions following the 2007 takeover, Hamas had blocked or restricted activities for Fatah.

While polls indicate Fatah is not that popular, the huge turnout could be seen as a rare opportunity to protest Hamas' heavy-handed rule in Gaza, noted AP.

The rally comes at a time of division between Palestinian Arabs. Fatah and Hamas remain bitter enemies and repeated Arab attempts to reconcile them failed.

A unity government between Hamas and Fatah collapsed in 2015 when Abbas decided to dissolve it amid a deepening rift between the sides.

Hamas and Fatah signed a reconciliation agreement in October of 2017, as part of which Hamas was to transfer power in Gaza by December 1 of that year.

That deadline was initially put back by 10 days and later reportedly hit "obstacles". It has never been implemented.

PA elections were scheduled for last year, but Abbas officially announced that they would be postponed. While he cited Israel's refusal to allow Arabs residing in eastern Jerusalem to vote as the reason for the postponement, many believe that the real reason is Abbas' fear that he would lose the elections to Hamas.

In early December, a senior Hamas official announced that a new round of dialogue for inter-factional reconciliation would be held in Algeria at the end of that month.

12.31.22

PA asks UN Court for opinion on Israel occupation; 87 against Israel, US & 24

12.31.22

U.N. asks World Court to give opinion on Israel's occupation

General Assembly asks the ICJ for advisory opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation, settlement and annexation and adoption of discriminatory legislation and measures .

Reuters|00:24

The 193-member United Nations General Assembly on Friday asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to give an opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem - areas the Palestinians want for a state - in a 1967 war. It withdrew from Gaza in 2005, but, along with neighboring Egypt, controls the enclave's borders.

The Hague-based ICJ, also known as the World Court, is the top U.N. court dealing with disputes between states. Its rulings are binding, though the ICJ has no power to enforce them.

The request for a court opinion on Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories was made in a resolution adopted by the General Assembly with 87 votes in favor. Israel, the United States and 24 other members voted against, while 53 abstained.

"No international body can decide that the Jewish people are 'occupiers' in their own homeland. Any decision from a judicial body which receives its mandate from the morally bankrupt and politicized U.N. is completely illegitimate," Israel's U.N.

Ambassador Gilad Erdan said in a statement ahead of the vote.

Israel's former Prime Minister Yair Lapid - who was replaced on Thursday by Benjamin Netanyahu - last month urged world leaders to oppose the move, saying that bringing the matter to the court would "only play into the hands of extremists".

The Islamist group Hamas took over Gaza in 2007 after a brief civil war with more moderate Palestinian rivals. Hamas and Israel have since fought three Gaza wars.

Palestinian U.N. envoy Riyad Mansour noted that the vote came one day after the swearing in of a new hard-right Israeli government that promises to expand Jewish settlements and pursue other policies criticized at home and abroad.

"We trust that, regardless of your vote today, if you believe in international law and peace, you will uphold the opinion of the International Court of Justice when delivered and you will stand up to this Israeli government right now," Mansour told the General Assembly.

The U.N. General Assembly asked the ICJ to give an advisory opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's "occupation, settlement and annexation ... including measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and from its adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures."

The U.N. resolution also asks the ICJ to advise on how those policies and practices "affect the legal status of the occupation" and what legal consequences arise for all countries and the United Nations from this status.

The ICJ last weighed in on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in 2004, when it ruled that an Israeli separation barrier was illegal. Israel rejected that ruling, accusing the court of being politically motivated.

The Palestinians on Saturday welcomed a vote by the United Nations General Assembly to ask the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for an opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories.

"The time has come for Israel to be a state subject to law, and to be held accountable for its ongoing crimes against our people," said Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

12.30.22

Concerns; civil rights, Syria-Iran, rising prices, another intifada, converting Jews

12.30.22

From Palestinians to economy: Main challenges of new Netanyahu government

In-depth: While Smotrich and Ben-Gvir have become poster boys of unruliness of new coalition, Netanyahu has host of other concerns as he reenters the premier office, like the cost of living and a threat of another intifada

Maurice Ifergan/i24NEWS|12.29.22 | 15:36

Benjamin Netanyahu's comeback as premier is all but complete as the new government was sworn in during a heated Knesset session on Thursday afternoon.

The veteran lawmaker has sought to calm concerns about the fate of civil rights and diplomacy since his bloc of nationalist and religious parties secured a parliamentary majority in a Nov. 1 election. But, he is also facing a host of challenges unrelated to the identity - as controversial as it may be - of his coalition partners.

The new Israeli government could quickly find itself confronted with two key issues in terms of security.

First is the replacement of Mahmoud Abbas. Aged 82, the President of the Palestinian Authority has generally not prepared his succession and the chaos that could follow his passing could prove sensitive for Israel. Especially since, in the event of new elections, Hamas promises to be largely victorious in the Palestinian territories.

The second issue is Iran. A crucial concern for Israel, is now at a standstill in terms of the nuclear threat, since any prospect of a nuclear agreement with the United States seems to

be receding as Jerusalem wished. However, **Iran continues to develop sophisticated weapons** that it **distributes to** Israel's regional enemies with Syria in the **front line**, which makes the Iranian threat very concrete, even **regardless of nuclear weapons**.

For Itamar **Ben-Gvir**, the new national **security minister**, the fight against crime in the **Arab sector** is a flagship **project**. But it seems unimaginable to expect results for several years, even with a major plan.

The prospects are the same for Jewish settlements in the territories, even if Bezalel Smotrich, ally of Ben-Gvir and supporter of "greater Israel," should have a free hand in this next government on this highly sensitive issue. The **coalition agreement implies that by 2025 Israeli jurisdiction will apply to all Israeli and Palestinian inhabitants** of zones B and C. **A way of annexing without saying so**. But this process could be slowed down by the American administration which has already warned incoming prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the matter.

#### Economy

**Two crucial issues worry Israelis** and affect their daily lives, much more than security threats - **rising prices and real estate**.

The new finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, has no experience in the economic sector, and his appointment to the post causes many concerns. The real "Mr. Economy" of the government remains Netanyahu, who could keep control of the portfolio behind the scenes. But no plan has yet been announced to battle rising prices.

The question of real estate, a crucial problem in Israel, also remains very vague as the future minister of the ultra-Orthodox party Agudat Yisrael, Yitzhak Goldknopf, has no relevant experience. He even admitted to "not knowing that the country was experiencing a real estate crisis." However, the question is an absolute priority for the country where home ownership has become almost impossible for young couples and where **rental prices are also constantly rising** due to a lack of available housing.

#### Society

LGBT rights could be threatened by the new government that has several officially homophobic ministers. However, Netanyahu said on several occasions that he would not accept any obstacle to the rights of the LGBT community and assured that the Jerusalem Pride Parade would be maintained. A promise to live up to, since the **coalition agreement contains a bill that would allow private contractors and medical personnel to refuse service to anyone if it goes "against their religious beliefs."**

#### Religion

The Israeli **status quo** between state and religion should be **maintained** and the ultra-Orthodox parties should not be led to ask for more, on paper. But Netanyahu has already **promised the ultra-Orthodox parties a law exemption from the army for yeshiva students**. These students should also receive an increase in the subsidies allocated to them.

Discussions remain open regarding the distribution of "secular" subjects in religious schools, which the ultra-Orthodox parties would like to see reduced in favor of religious subjects. The other key issue could be that of Shabbat transport, which could be managed locally and not nationally. Finally, the **conversion** file could find itself on the front line in

a country with 500,000 non-Jews from Russia or Ukraine, who found themselves without a civil status in a state, where this status is governed by religious representatives.  
Reprinted with permission from i24NEWS

====   ====   ====   ====  
====   ====   ====   ====

Ynet-News, December 29, 2022 – Thursday

12.29.22 – Th- - - News   Placed in December 28 spot – Wednesday  
US lawmakers probe use of DEA & FBI spyware made by two Israeli firms

12.29.22 – Th- - - News   Placed in December 27 spot – Tuesday  
Biden repeats US commitment to 2-state solution in message to Netanyahu

12.29.22 – Th- - - News   Placed in December 29 spot – Thursday  
Netanyahu's 37th government approved by 63 of 120 Israel's parliament

12.29.22 – Th- - - News   – Thursday  
Jordan king weary of status quo with incoming Netanyahu government

12.27.22 – Tu- - - News   Placed in December 26 spot – Monday  
Thousands on Ashkelon beach gather strewn products of three shipping containers