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UN Security Council to meet over Ben-Gvir's Temple Mount visit

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Responding to PA using World Court; PA tax money will compensate Israel victims

1.06.23

Israel to take steps in response to Palestinian moves at World Court

Measures include using Palestinian money to compensate victims of Palestinian terror attacks and imposing a moratorium on Palestinian construction in some areas of the West Bank

Reuters|11:05

Israel said on Friday it would take retaliatory steps in response to a Palestinian bid to involve the International Court of Justice in the decades-old conflict.

The measures decided on by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing security cabinet include using Palestinian money to compensate victims of Palestinian militant attacks and imposing a moratorium on Palestinian construction in some areas of the West Bank.

This comes as a "response to the Palestinian Authority's decision to wage political and legal war against the State of Israel", said Netanyahu's office.

Last week, following an appeal by the Palestinians, the UN General Assembly asked the Hague-based World Court to give an opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's 55-year-old presence in disputed territories.

Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem - areas the Palestinians want for a state - in the 1967 Six-Day War. It withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but, along with neighboring Egypt, controls the enclave's borders after it was taken over by Islamists Hamas. The Palestinian Authority (PA) has had limited self-rule in the West Bank under 1990s interim peace deals.

The World Court is the top UN court dealing with disputes between states. Its rulings are binding, though it has no power to enforce them.

Israel, which collects tax money on behalf of the PA, would use 139 million shekels (\$39 million) from PA funds to compensate victims of Palestinian militant attacks and would also offset the stipends the PA pays to Palestinians who carried out attacks and their families, said Netanyahu's office.

The moratorium on Palestinian building, it said, would be for a part of the West Bank called Area C, which is under full Israeli control.

"These decisions are condemned and rejected both in relation to money and other measures they are planning," said Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for PA President Mahmoud Abbas. (\$1 = 3.5421 shekels)

1.06.23

Israel slams absurd double standard for UN session on Ben-Gvir's Temple Mount visit

1.06.23

Israel slams 'pathetic' UN Security Council session on Ben-Gvir's Temple Mount visit
Gilad Erdan, Israel's UN envoy, says 'there is absolutely no reason that this emergency session should be held' in the wake of far-right lawmaker's visit to the holy site earlier this week

i24NEWS, Ynet|Yesterday | 14:51

The United Nations Security Council convened on Thursday for an emergency session over National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's visit to the Temple Mount earlier this week, which Israel condemned as "pathetic."

Ben-Gvir, a controversial far-right lawmaker in Israel's government, visited the holy site in Jerusalem on Tuesday, sparking backlash and widespread criticism of what many

called a "provocative" move. The Temple Mount is where Israel's First and Second Temples stood and is the holiest site in Judaism. It is also the site of the Al Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam.

After his ascent, the Security Council said it will hold an emergency session to discuss the first visit by an Israeli government minister to the Temple Mount in five years. While government ministers have come to the holy place in the past, it remains a flash point for escalations between Palestinians and Israelis.

Ahead of the meeting, Israel's UN envoy Gilad Erdan said in a press briefing that he was "truly shocked."

"There is absolutely no reason that this emergency session should be held. To hold it on a non-event is truly absurd," he said. "Why are we holding an emergency session for something as simple as a Jew walking to the holiest site in Judaism?"

Erdan further pointed to events going on elsewhere in the world which he suggested the council was not responding to nor holding emergency sessions for, urging there was a double standard when it comes to the Jewish state.

Meanwhile, Russian Ambassador to the UN Vasily Nebenzya at the UNSC session compared Ben-Gvir's visit to that of Ariel Sharon in 2000 which helped spark the Second Intifada. He called on "both sides to show restraint and avoid unilateral provocations."

China also piled criticism on the hardline Israeli rightist and his antics, saying Beijing was worried about rising tensions following the visit.

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1.04.23

Oman flips; criminalizes relations with Israel, to avoid Iran anger

1.04.23

Oman, once considered next Abraham Accords signer, criminalizes relations with Israel. Details unclear as to why the sultanate ruled relations with Israel a criminal offense after years of friendly relations and past visits by leaders.

David I. Klein/JTA|14:35

Just a few years ago, Oman was expected to be next in line after Morocco, Sudan, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates to sign onto the Abraham Accords normalization agreements with Israel.

On Friday, the country's parliament voted to criminalize any relations or interactions with "the Zionist entity."

While the exact details have not been made public, the new law seems to be broadly applied.

"The brothers, Your Excellencies, looked at the development taking place, whether it was technical, cultural, economic or sports, and proposed additional amendments that include severing any economic, sports or cultural relations and prohibiting dealing in any way or

means, whether it was a **real** meeting, an **electronic** meeting **or something else**,” said Yaqoub Al-Harithi, vice president of the Omani parliament, about the bill, according to Oman’s WAF news agency.

The **sultanate** at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, where the Indian Ocean meets the Persian Gulf, **was** for a long time **closer with Israel than other states in the region** were. Oman never took part in any war with the Jewish state and established unofficial trade relations with Israel in the early 2000s.

Omani Sultan Qaboos Bin Said welcomed three Israeli prime ministers to his country: Yitzhak Rabin in 1994, Shimon Peres in 1996 and Benjamin Netanyahu in 2018. Rabin’s visit was the first by an Israeli prime minister to a Gulf nation.

Under Qaboos’ leadership, Oman carved a niche for itself as the **Switzerland of the Middle East**, able to **deal** simultaneously **with countries such as Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Yemen**, all while **maintaining** a sense of **neutrality**. The country has been an important **middleman in everything** from the Iranian nuclear talks to Yemeni Civil War negotiations.

So what happened?

Sultan Qaboos, who was the longest reigning ruler of the Middle East’s oldest independent state, **died in 2020 with no heirs**. Rulership **passed to his cousin** Haitham Bin Tariq.

Though Sultan Haitham, upon his inauguration, announced that he would follow in his predecessor’s peace-making footsteps, **he has moved closer to Iran, which funds military activity throughout the region**.

While Saudi Arabia opened its airspace for Israeli flights earlier this year, Oman has held out on opening its own, **blocking** the most **direct route for some flights from Israel to Asia**. In doing so, Oman has received pressure from President Joe Biden’s administration to open its skies.

However, the developments Al-Harithi is referring to in his statement could include the rise of **Israel’s new right-wing** government, which has already **provoked anger well beyond the Middle East**.

“What also potentially fuels this is a **recent call by** a number of **Arab countries**, including the UAE, to go to the **United Nations** and **condemn Israel** over the recent rise of [Itamar] Ben-Gvir,” Nir Boms, the director of the Program for Regional Cooperation at the Moshe Dayan Center of Tel Aviv University said.

Protesting Israel “**remains** one of the few **unifying factors in the Arab world**,” Boms said. For more Islamist-leaning factions across the region, “The issues around Israel are coming to a point where they need to have a counter-reaction and come back to a boycott policy,” he added.

Another reason **may be fear of Iran, which is conducting military exercises off of Oman’s coast** and is reeling from months of domestic protest.

“The last thing Muscat wants is for the Gulf to become a battlefield with attacks on western shipping, resulting in the closure of the Straits of Hormuz,” said Tom Gross, a British journalist and Middle East expert. “**Oman, like Qatar, is trying to calm Iran**. Their

message is: 'We are not the ones rushing to form relations with Israel so don't take it out on us.'"

Despite the bill, Gross thinks that Omani relations with Israel will continue as they always have, under the table.

"The Omani vote was primarily designed to appease the Iranian regime. There is a feeling in intelligence circles that the counter-revolutionary uprising in Iran has passed the point of no return and as a result the regime in Tehran may try to externalize its domestic problems," Gross said. "Meanwhile, relations with Israel will likely continue, albeit more quietly."

Content distributed by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency news service.

1.04.23

Levin & PM intend Court ruling reform override to balance the three branches

1.04.23

Israel's justice minister introduces controversial judicial reform

Yariv Levin lays out moves designed to crimp judges' power, including overhaul of judge selection panel's makeup and law to override Supreme Court rulings

Tova Zimukij14:09

Justice Minister Yariv Levin on Wednesday revealed a raft of controversial reforms to Israel's judicial system that may put the executive and judicial branches on a collision course.

"We go to the polls, vote, and time after time, people we did not elect decide for us," Levin told a press conference in the Knesset.

"Many look up to the judiciary, but their voices are not heard. This is not democracy. I have been dealing with this issue for over 20 years, during which I warned about the harms of 'judicialization' and formulated proposals and reforms. Unfortunately, the risks I warned about have materialized.

Therefore, it is time to act. Today I am launching the first phase of the governance reform, whose purpose is to strengthen democracy, restore governance, restore trust in the judicial system and restore balance between the three branches of government." First, Levin announced the Israeli bar association would lose its representation in the Judicial Selection Committee, which appoints judges to Israeli courts, to two "public servants".

The minister then vowed to pass a law that would allow the legislature to override Supreme Court rulings with a 61-vote majority in the 120-seat Knesset. Lastly, Levin previewed moves to forbid the court from using a test of "reasonableness" against which to judge government decisions, arguing "there is no such thing as reasonableness."

According to Levin's approach, the Supreme Court should mainly deal with settling disputes and criminal and civil appeals, and not replace the people through their representatives in the Knesset and the government.

Levin also supports the transparency of legal proceedings in petitions on public matters, including live broadcasts of High Court hearings.

Earlier Wednesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that his government intends to "apply reforms that will ensure the right balance between the three branches."

1.04.23

Jordan response to Ben-Gvir visit will become suicide bombers for Gaza

1.04.23

Jordanian lawmaker says 'Jordanians will become suicide bombers for Al-Aqsa'

Yanal Abd al-Salam says further escalation will lead to violence and calls for Jordan to renew ties with Gaza-based terror groups

i24NEWS|13:36

A member of Jordan's parliament on Wednesday said that Jordanians would become "suicide bombers" for the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in response to the previous day's visit to the Temple Mount by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

Using an antisemitic reference to Jews as "the sons of monkeys and pigs," MP Yanal Abd al-Salam Nour al-Din al-Fraihat said in a speech at Jordan's national assembly in the capital Amman that "the response of the Palestinian and Jordanian people at the moment is only talk, but this is a volcano and soon the response will be with lead bullets."

Al-Fraihat said that "as soon as the Al-Aqsa Mosque is involved, this is a real red line and all Jordanians will become fighters and suicide bombers for Palestine and for Al-Aqsa."

The lawmaker has previously supported terrorism against Israel and called for Jordan to renew relations with the Gaza-based terrorist group Hamas.

Ben-Gvir drew a wave of international condemnation following his visit to the Temple Mount, which is the holiest site in Judaism and the third holiest in Islam, containing the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The site in Jerusalem is where the First and Second Temples stood.

The United Nations Security Council will reportedly hold an emergency session to discuss the recent visit, which follows the widespread condemnation including from Jordan's Foreign Ministry, which condemned "in the strongest terms... the storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque / Al-Haram Al-Sharif this morning, under the protection of the Israeli occupation forces."

The Jordanians stressed that the compound is a "pure place of worship" for Muslims. Reprinted with permission from i24NEWS.

1.04.23

Poll: 70% of secular Israelis worry about their future under new government

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Majority believe ultra-Orthodox overrepresented in Israeli politics; optimism among Jews fell to 42% in December and 33% among Arabs

i24NEWS|10:59

Some 70 percent of secular Jews in Israel are worried about preserving their way of life under Benjamin Netanyahu's new government, deemed the most religious and right-wing in the country's history, said an Israel Democracy Institute poll released Wednesday.

The survey, conducted by the Viterbi Center for the Study of Public Opinion and Politics, also found that about 75 percent of respondents believe that the influence of the ultra-Orthodox community on Israeli politics is very large or quite large compared to their share of the population.

On the other hand, 57 percent of respondents said that the influence of women and the LGBT community on Israeli politics is lower than their representation in the country's population.

Two months after the elections, there was an average 6 percent drop in optimism about the future of Israel's democratic government, from 46 percent in November to 40 percent in December.

Among Jews, the optimism rate fell from 48 percent in November to 42 percent in December, while among Arabs it fell from 34 percent in November to 33 percent in December.

Regarding Israel's international status, 85 percent of the left-wing respondents predict a change for the worse against 74 percent of the centrist audience. On the other hand, only 36 percent of right-wing Israelis believe that the country's position will be undermined by the new government.

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1.04.23

India honors civic award to restaurant with authentic Indian cuisine in Israel

1.04.23

India honors restaurateur living in Israel with highest civic award

Reena Pushkarna has been invited back to her home country to receive the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award thanks to her remarkable culinary exploits; 'I've shown people the essence of Indian culture through cuisine,' she says

Itamar Eichner|04:53

The Indian government said it will award the country's annual, highest civic award to Reena Pushkarna, a celebrity chef, restaurateur, business entrepreneur living in Israel.

The 2023 Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award is the highest honor a non-resident Indian can receive.

Reena, along with husband Vinod, is credited with introducing authentic Indian cuisine to Israeli palates with the Tandoori/Kohinoor restaurant chain. She was invited by the Indian government to receive the award thanks to her excellence in the field of business, community and social engagement.

Upon arrival in India, she is scheduled to meet Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has enjoyed her delicacies during past visits to Israel. The award ceremony will also be attended by Indian President Droupadi Murmu.

"When they told me I won, I just couldn't believe it," said Pushkarna. "Since it is the highest honor a non-resident Indian can receive, I couldn't be prouder. I've shown people the essence of Indian culture through authentic cuisine. An entire generation grew up appreciating my 'chicken tikka' dish (made with spices, onions and coriander) and I'm very proud of my heritage."

"I'm grateful to the Israeli people for accepting me. I think I'm the only Indian walking around Israel with a Bindi (traditional Hindu red mark placed on forehead).

"My husband, Vinod, is the driving force behind this journey and this wouldn't have happened without him."

1.04.23

UN Security Council to meet over Ben-Gvir's Temple Mount visit

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Meeting expected to be convened at UAE and China's request on Thursday, according to diplomatic sources, following condemnation by U.S., Europeans and Arab nations
i24NEWS, Ynet, Agencies|00:58

The United Arab Emirates and China have asked the U.N. Security Council to meet publicly, over recent developments at Al Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem, diplomats said on Tuesday.

The meeting will likely be scheduled for Thursday, according diplomatic sources.

The site is considered holy by both Muslims and Jews.

The UAE joined the Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Qatar in condemning the first visit by an Israeli government minister to the Temple Mount in five years.

While government ministers have come to the site in the past, it remains a flash point for escalations between Palestinians and Israelis. Most notably, late prime minister Ariel Sharon's visit there in 2000 is seen as the straw that broke the camel's back in sparking the Second Intifada.

Ben-Gvir is a controversial figure in Israel, with opponents from a broad spectrum of Israeli political stances. His visit was condemned in newspapers affiliated with ultra-Orthodox groups, whose rabbis generally consider such tours on the site against Jewish law.

However, his visit was reportedly cleared by Netanyahu.

Israel's Opposition Leader Yair Lapid earlier said the visit could incite violence, and Hamas warned Israel against such a move. Some clashes were reported in Jerusalem, but Israel has yet to experience any serious backlash.

A rocket was launched Tuesday night from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip, although it did not pass the security fence. This likely indicates it was shot by one of the other militant groups in the Palestinian enclave, and that Hamas is - for the time being - not responding to what Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas called a "provocation."

Abbas said he would go to the UN Security Council over Ben-Gvir's tour.

U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said the Biden administration opposes "any unilateral actions that undercut the historic status."

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Ynet-News, January 06, 2023 – Friday

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