

Ynet-News, March 7, 2023 – Tuesday

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Protesters in front of Tel Aviv US embassy plead for Biden to stop judicial reform

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Six dead in Israeli raid on Jenin, eliminated terrorist who murdered two brothers

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Syria Aleppo airport damaged in IDF strike for funneling Iranian weaponry

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Lapid and Gantz: refuse dialogue without halting all legislation on reform

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Pro-Israel watchdog says UN HR official unfit to serve; denying Israel's right to exist

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Brazil grants berth to two Iranian warships; Ted Cruz called for Brazil sanctions

3.01.23 – We- - - News Placed in March 01 spot – Wednesday

Police clash as protesters blocked main thoroughfare & rally turns violent

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3.07.23

Protesters in front of Tel Aviv US embassy plead for Biden to stop judicial reform

3.07.23

In front of U.S. embassy, Israelis plead with Biden to help stop judicial overhaul

As government pushes forward with legal reform, scores of protesters descend upon U.S. mission in Tel Aviv to turn outward for help and urge POTUS to speak out

Gilad Meiri | 12:39

Scores of Israelis descended upon the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv on Tuesday in an appeal to President Joe Biden to speak up against the Israeli government's planned shakeup of the country's legal system.

In a video from the manifestation uploaded to YouTube, demonstrators are seen waving U.S. and Israeli flags and chanting slogans.

"President Biden, please help Israeli democracy! This is a heartfelt plea from a mother, we need the help of our best friend," one woman says in the video.

"It's his duty as the President of the United States and the leader of the free world," another man says.

"The price of error is intolerable," says a **protester** wearing a black baseball cap before **shouting** "we need your help" **into a bullhorn**.

A woman holding a giant Israeli flag says: "I never anticipated for Israel to lose the democracy, to lose their values of freedom and equality."

Yalla Tikva, the group behind the protest, said on their Facebook page: "Dear Mr. President Joe Biden, **do not fall for Netanyahu's lies**. **He does not care for Israel** or its democracy. The only thing that matters to him is avoiding prison at all cost. Please don't give in or up on us. Help us save ISRAEL."

On the ground was a **giant replica of the Israeli Declaration of Independence undersigned by the protesters**.

3.07.23

Six dead in Israeli raid on Jenin, eliminated terrorist who murdered two brothers

3.07.23

Palestinians report at least six dead in Israeli raid on Jenin, including Huwara attacker Abd al-Fattah Kharousha, who is believed to have shot dead Israeli brothers Hallel and Yagel Yaniv last week, reportedly killed in clashes with Israeli security forces Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi, Lior El-Hai|Updated:11:53

The **Palestinian Health Ministry reported on Tuesday** that at least **six Palestinians** have been **killed** in clashes with Israeli security forces in the northern **West Bank** city of **Jenin**, including an individual thought to be **responsible for** last week's deadly **terror** attack in Huwara **in which brothers Hallel and Yagel Yaniv were killed**.

Israeli **troops** conducted a **raid** seeking to apprehend several individuals suspected of involvement in terrorist activities and surrounded a **compound** where **several suspects** were believed to be **barricaded**, **including** suspected Huwara **shooter** Abd al-Fattah Kharousha — a 48-year-old Hamas operative from the Askar refugee camp on the outskirts of Nablus. Kharousha was **believed to have planned to carry out another attack in the immediate future**.

However, the operation quickly turned violent as a **fierce shootout** erupted in the area **between** the Israeli **troops and local militants**.

Another casualty was identified as 26-year-old Muhammed Wael Ghazzawi and several other Palestinians were reportedly wounded.

Hamas's military wing Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades in the Jenin refugee camp said in a statement that its operatives were "involved in violent armed clashes with the occupation forces storming the camp, our fighters attacked the Zionist army with IEDs."

Jenin residents reported having received text messages from the IDF that said: "Residents of the Jenin camp, we urge you to refrain from participating in the violent events and the confrontations against our forces in order to protect your family and children. The forces won't hesitate to act against anyone who assists terror."

Meanwhile, IDF forces also detained Kharousha's three children in the Askar refugee camp under heavy militant fire.

Two members of the Border Police's elite counterterrorism unit Yamam were reportedly lightly wounded during the operation and transported to Rambam Health Care Campus in Haifa for treatment.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu lauded troops for the surgical operation in the heart of Jenin.

"IDF, Shin Bet and Yamam fighters today eliminated the despicable terrorist who murdered in cold blood the two lovely brothers Hallel and Yagel Yaniv," he said.

"Our brave warriors operated surgically in the heart of the murderers' den. I praise them and send recovery wishes to the wounded from among our forces.

As I say again and again, time and time again: whoever hurts us – their blood will be on their head."

First published: 17:08, 03.07.23

3.06.23

Syria Aleppo airport damaged in Israeli strike Tuesday funneling Iranian weaponry

3.06.23

Syria says Aleppo airport damaged in Israeli strike

Citing a military source, the state news agency SANA reports material Aleppo airport put out of service but does not mention casualties; airport used to receive aid for victims of recent deadly earthquake

Associated Press|Yesterday | 22:59

An Israeli airstrike hit the Aleppo airport early Tuesday and put it out of service, Syrian state media reported.

Citing a military source, the state news agency SANA said Israel “carried out an air attack from the direction of the Mediterranean Sea, west of Latakia, targeting Aleppo International Airport.” SANA said the strike “caused material damage” to the airport.

It was not immediately clear if there were any casualties.

There was no comment from Israeli officials. Israel has carried out **hundreds of strikes** on targets inside government-controlled parts of Syria **in recent years**, including attacks on the **Damascus and Aleppo airports**, but it **rarely** acknowledges or **discusses** the **operations**.

Israel has acknowledged, however, that it targets bases of Iran-allied militant groups, such as Lebanon’s Hezbollah, which has sent thousands of fighters to support President Assad’s forces.

Aleppo, which suffered widespread destruction in Syria’s civil war, was again heavily **damaged in the deadly 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria** last month. A number of countries have since sent aid shipments to the city’s airport.

On **Feb. 19**, **Israeli airstrikes targeted** residential areas in Syria’s capital, **Damascus**, killing at least five people and wounding 15, according to Syrian state news.

On Jan. 2, the Syrian army said Israel’s military fired missiles toward the capital’s international airport, putting it out of service and killing two soldiers. That attack came amid Israeli fears the **Damascus** airport was being **used to funnel Iranian weaponry into the country**.

3.06.23

Lapid and Gantz: refuse dialogue without halting all legislation on reform

3.06.23

Lapid and Gantz: No dialogue without judicial reform freeze

Despite Herzog's optimism on reaching understandings, **opposition leaders remain steadfast** in their demands; 'Their **protests are designed** to bring down Israel's rightful government,' Smotrich says

Moran Azulay|Yesterday | 12:37

Opposition leader Yair **Lapid** and National Unity Chairman Benny **Gantz** on **Monday** **reiterated** their call for Israel's hardline government to **freeze** the legislative **process** of its **overhaul of the judiciary** as a **precondition to dialogue** as the controversial plan continues to roil Israeli society.

In a joint statement, **the two centrist leaders** lauded **attempts by** President Isaac **Herzog** to **bridge the gaps** between the opponents and proponents of the proposed reform but **accused** Prime Minister Benjamin **Netanyahu** of refusing to step to the fore and halt the legislation as "Israel is on the cusp of a national emergency."

"In order to achieve and sustain an honest dialogue to keep Israel as a democratic state, Netanyahu must announce an immediate and unconditional halt to all legislative efforts pertaining to the reform. Shortcuts will not lead to real dialogue," the statement read. Earlier on Monday, President Herzog said that "an agreed framework is closer than ever", but opposition leaders do not seem to echo his point of view. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich responded to the statement by saying that Lapid and Gantz are "disrespecting the president and proving once again they have no interest in conversing. Their protests are purely political, designed to sow chaos in order to bring down Israel's rightful government, and that's not going to happen."

Labor Party Chairman Merav Michaeli said: "The Netanyahu government must announce the suspension of his attempts to bring a judicial revolution. There's no compromise. Nothing but immediate and full suspension.

"I welcome the announcement of my colleagues, Yair Lapid and Benny Gantz, for the unequivocal position on this issue. A united opposition will stand up to any attempt to turn Israel into a dictatorship," she added.

Meanwhile, the organizers of some of the mass street protests sparked nationwide by the reform also expressed their doubts about the chances of the president's overtures bearing fruit as they brace for another day of mass protests on Thursday.

"We won't stand for fraud. The government must cease all legislative efforts immediately, and with no preconditions. While the president's efforts are sincere, they're doomed to fail because of a coalition hellbent on turning Israel into a dictatorship," they said.

"This Thursday will mark a national resistance day to a dictatorship, and next week we will step up our fight in new ways."

Earlier today, President Herzog met with 100 local leaders and mayors to work on a joint framework for dialogue, and people involved in those discussions remain optimistic, saying the gaps are closing and that "it's the politicians' turn to take the reins the rest of the way."

"Most issues have been ironed out," said President Herzog. "Both the coalition and the opposition must rise to meet this occasion. It is incumbent upon them to put the people of Israel above petty politics and answer this constitutional moment.

The framework I've worked toward answers the needs of both sides, to reflect the variety of positions and communities in Israel, so those will be represented in our judiciary. A historical constitutional foundation is paramount to maintaining the balance between the three branches of government, safeguarding democracy and the sanctity of human rights, as well as an independent judiciary.

It ensures the rights of minorities are kept and that Israel remains both a Jewish and democratic state, based on the values reflected in the Declaration of Independence."

On Monday, 10 former Israeli Air Force commanders sent Netanyahu a letter, airing their concerns about the possible ramifications entailed in passing the judicial reform. "With grave concern, we are keeping a close watch as events unfold, both in the Air Force and the country at large," the letter read.

The letter, signed among others by former IDF chief of staff Dan Halutz, says: "As we are fully aware of the singular importance of our Air Force to maintain the security of the State of Israel, we are concerned about what's to follow should the reform pass as it pertains to our national security."

This letter follows the one signed by 37 pilots of Squadron 69, saying they will avoid providing assistance should the reform become law. The unit, known as "The Hammers", is described as the "long-range, heavy bombing element of Israeli air power."

3.03.23

Putin recruits PA, Syria & Lebanese led by Abbas to fight in Ukraine

3.03.23

Putin paying Palestinians from Lebanese camps to fight in Ukraine, report says
Lebanese security source says young Palestinian men, mostly members of the Fatah political movement, are being paid \$350 per month to enlist in the Russian military, while elite Syrian troops are also being recruited
Majdi Halabi/The Media Line|05:54

A Lebanese government security source has revealed that Palestinians residing in Lebanon have signed up to join the ongoing conflict in Ukraine on behalf of Russia, having been offered a sum of 350 USD by Russian entities.

The source added that the recruitment effort is being carried out by activists affiliated with the Palestinian embassy in Lebanon.

Most of those enlisting were born after 1969, as those born after from this point onwards do not have proper registration with the Lebanese authorities, making it easier to travel for the purpose of participating in the conflict as mercenaries.
As a result, the Lebanese government lacks the ability to monitor or track the movements of these Palestinian recruits for Russia.

The majority of the Palestinians being deployed to the frontlines in Ukraine hail from Ein Al-Khalwa, the largest Palestine refugee camp in Lebanon, just south of the port city of Sidon.

The recruits are reportedly members of the Fatah political movement, which is led by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, as well as to other organizations such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The individuals reportedly receive a monthly stipend and compensation for their families in exchange for agreeing to participate in the conflict in Ukraine on behalf of Russian forces.

The Lebanese security source indicated that the recruitment of Palestinians and others is being carried out in coordination with the Lebanese-based, Iranian-backed Hezbollah organization.

According to the source, Hezbollah is also actively enlisting young supporters, including those skilled in operating drones and individuals with expertise in guerrilla warfare in urban areas, to assist the Russians in the war in Ukraine.

Riad Kahwaji, a prominent and veteran Lebanese researcher in security and defense affairs, who resides in Dubai, said that the recruitment of Palestinians from Lebanon is not unfathomable.

“I do not have specific information on this subject, but I am not surprised that it happened because the situation in the camps is miserable... and there are no jobs for young people,” he said.

“It is not surprising that they were recruited to work with the Russians in return for paying them salaries because the camp environment is open to such possibilities,” Kahwaji said.

“Palestinian camps in both Syria and Lebanon have high unemployment, and it is not surprising that these things happen.”

It is not clear exactly how many Palestinians have been recruited to fight for Russia, but it is thought that approximately 300 individuals have already completed rapid training in Russia and been deployed to the frontlines.

In the Ein Al-Khalwa refugee camp, another group of approximately 100 additional fighters is reportedly being organized and prepared for deployment to Russia in the near future.

Muhammad Sarmini, Director of the Abaad Center for Strategic Studies, based in London and Istanbul, said that since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Syria has seen two paths for recruiting fighters to join the invading Russian troops.

The first path is recruitment via the Wagner Group, a Russian paramilitary organization believed to have been founded by Dmitry Valerievich Utkin, a former special forces officer in Russia’s Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU).

The group’s representatives recruited fighters in areas along the Syrian coast and with a high population of young Palestinians. The recruitment process was conducted through delegates who met inside the Khmeimim Air Base, a Russian-controlled installation near the northwestern port city of Latakia.

The second path includes sending fighters from the Syrian regular forces, especially from the military units supervised by Russia, such as the 25th Special Operations Division, headed by Maj. Gen. Suhail Al-Hassan.

Sarmini said these elite fighters are highly paid to enter the war zone, earning 500-700 USD per month, a very high sum by Syrian standards.

Russia’s desire to recruit Syrian fighters has two aims: to bolster the number of its fighters in Ukraine and as a display of loyalty from the regime of Bashar Assad, which would not have survived until today without Russian support.

The Palestinian embassy in Lebanon declined to comment on the matter, saying it had no connection to the conflict in Ukraine and did not encourage Palestinians to participate in it. The story was reprinted with permission from The Media Line

Pro-Israel watchdog says UN HR official unfit to serve; denying Israel's right to exist

3.02.23

Pro-Israel watchdog says UN rights official unfit to serve

Advocacy group says Craig Mokhiber, affiliated with the UN Human Rights Council, consistently shows anti-Israel bias as demonstrated on his social media posts and accuses Israel of 'genocide, ethnic cleansing, and large-scale atrocities,'

Daniel Edelson/New York|Yesterday | 10:34

A top UN Human Rights Official, Craig Mokhiber, the Director of the New York Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), was accused by pro-Israel watchdog groups, of violating his duty and lacking neutrality in human rights issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Critics including contend that despite being a part of an agency that claims to be apolitical and merely carries out the directives of the 47-nation UN Human Rights Council - Mokhiber's long history of publishing virulently anti-Israel statements makes him unfit for his position.

According to the UN Charter, staff must be held to the highest standards of fairness and impartiality in conducting their work. However, Mokhiber has repeatedly accused Israel of heinous crimes, including "genocide," "ethnic cleansing," and "large-scale atrocities," on his public Twitter and Facebook accounts.

He has also accused Israel of "apartheid", "racism domination, violence, and oppression," as well as of committing "right-wing white ethno-nationalist terrorism" that "is murdering people."

Critics argue that Mokhiber's social media presence shows a clear lack of neutrality in human rights issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They also note his silence about any actions against Israelis, whether by Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, Iran, or the Palestinian Authority.

2 million civilians interned in #Gaza in a continuous act of collective punishment, year after year denied the necessities of life, routinely shot by snipers, bombed repeatedly, arrested& tortured, denied the right to even protest their treatment, and the world is silent #RACISM

— Craig Mokhiber (@CraigMokhiber) November 16, 2019

This bias is especially problematic given Mokhiber's direct involvement in OHCHR initiatives on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He served as a senior advisor in the Palestinian territories from 1996-1998 and was a key player in some of the UN's most influential events related to the conflict. This includes introducing five reports to the UN General Assembly that demonized Israel. He was also involved in the process leading to the establishment of the Human Rights Council.

Pro-Israeli NGO "UN watch" contends that Mokhiber's consistent use of hate-mongering rhetoric on social media normalizes anti-Israel sentiments across the UN human rights system. They note that his posts include accusations targeting supporters of Israel,

promoting the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, and denying Israel's right to exist.

Mokhiber's use of the term "genocide" has drawn criticism for belittling genuine cases of genocide and ethnic cleansing committed around the world. Critics have categorized and documented Mokhiber's social media posts, arguing that his overt bias undermines his ability to fulfill his mandate objectively.

When asked for comment, Mokhiber and OHCHR declined to respond. However, in recent tweets, Mokhiber pushed back against his critics, stating that "if you defend the human rights of Palestinians you will be smeared as an antisemite. After 40+ years in the human rights movement, I'm used to this dance. I suggest you find a new hobby. I hear there are some fun TikTok challenges out there!", he answered his critics.

The Twitter trolls are out in force today. Another organized campaign to smear me for defending human rights. Sorry guys. After 40+ years in the human rights movement, I'm used to this dance. I suggest you find a new hobby. I hear there are some fun TikTok challenges out there!

— Craig Mokhiber (@CraigMokhiber) March 1, 2023

He also garnered support from Francesca Albanese, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories, who has been criticized for her own anti-Israeli posts on social media. "Shooting the messenger is the only card left to those whose sole purpose is to shelter Israel from accountability", Albanese tweeted, "Unfortunately for them - and for Palestinians- Israel's brutal occupation has grown out of control. It can no longer be whitewashed by smearing human rights voices".

A bipartisan group of members of Congress recently called for her ouster, but the UN refused to comment.

3.02.23

Brazil grants berth to two Iranian warships; Ted Cruz called for Brazil sanctions

3.02.23

Israel urges Brazil to undock Iranian warships

Foreign Ministry calls Brazil's decision to allow Iranian warships to dock 'dangerous' and emphasizes that the country can still undo the move; ships also cause tensions with the United States after U.S. ambassador to Brazil urges not to allow them to dock

Reuters|Yesterday | 09:04

Israel on Thursday criticized Brazil's decision to grant berth to two Iranian warships in the face of U.S. pressure and urged President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's government to send them away.

The vessels docked in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday. Brazil had declined to admit them in January, in a goodwill gesture from Lula as he flew to Washington to meet U.S. President Joe Biden.

Israel and Iran have been locked in a Cold War-style conflict for decades, which has included mutual accusations of maritime sabotage, even as Tehran faces intensified global pressure over its nuclear program and regional conduct.

Lior Haiat, the spokesperson for Israel's Foreign Ministry, called the Brazilian berth for the warships "a dangerous and regretful development," accusing the Iranian navy of cooperating with sanctioned entities in Tehran.

"It is still not too late to order the ships to leave the port," Haiat said on Twitter.

President Lula's press office did not respond to a request for comment.

The ships have also caused tensions with the United States. In a Feb. 15 press conference, the U.S. ambassador to Brazil had urged it not to allow the vessel to dock.

On Wednesday, Senator Ted Cruz called for sanctions against the South American country after the docking, dubbing it "a direct threat to the safety and security of Americans."

"The Biden administration is obligated to impose relevant sanctions, re-evaluate Brazil's cooperation with U.S. antiterrorism efforts, and re-examine whether Brazil is maintaining effective antiterrorism measures at its ports," Republican Cruz said in a statement.

A February 23 notice in a Brazilian gazette said the warships had been given permission to dock between February 26 and March 4.

Diplomacy with Iran was one of the highlights of Lula's attempts to bolster Brazil's international standing during his previous presidential terms. He traveled to Tehran to meet then-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2010 as he sought to broker a nuclear deal between Iran and the United States.

3.01.23

Police clash as protesters blocked main thoroughfare & rally turns violent

3.01.23

Police clash with protesters as anti-government rally turns violent

Forces use crowd dispersal measures, including stun grenades, water cannons and tear gas; Ben-Gvir calls protesters 'anarchists'; at least 11 protesters wounded, at least 37 were arrested

Ynet|06:52

Israeli demonstrators protesting the government's judicial overhaul on Wednesday clashed with police as nationwide rallies over the legislative push turned violent.

At first, the police stood by to maintain order, but as the protesters blocked the main thoroughfare, an order was given, and stun grenades were thrown into the crowd. The police then used crowd dispersal measures against the protesters including water guns and tear gas.

This was an escalation in the protests that were mostly conducted without police intervention over the past weeks, including in mass demonstrations outside the Knesset. Organizers said at least 11 protesters were hurt and at least 37 were arrested.

Earlier on Wednesday, thousands gathered at a busy intersection leading into Israel's largest metropolis carrying flags and signs calling the coalition's moves "an assault on Israel's democracy."

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir was at the police headquarters overseeing activities. He called the protesters "anarchists," and pledged he would not allow disruption of day-to-day life. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Ben-Gvir had his full support.

The prime minister also accused opposition leader Yair Lapid for encouraging the demonstrations. "He does not want to reach agreements and refuses our calls for dialogue," the premier said, while police clashed with protesters in Tel Aviv. Netanyahu said the demonstrations must not block roads and disrupt routine. "No one wants to see our country reduced to anarchy," he said.

The police claimed that protesters threw stones at officers, an allegation that was denied, including by former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, a critic of Netanyahu, who was present. "I did not see the police arrest any of the hundreds of rioters who burned Huwara on Sunday," he said.

The IDF reported it had arrested six suspects on Wednesday, after six others who were detained immediately after the riots were released. Marches and demonstrations took place all over the country, while the coalition pushed on with its judicial overhaul legislation in the Knesset, passing the bill to override the power of the Supreme Court in a preliminary reading.

Should the bill pass, Shas leader Aryeh Deri, who was forced out of the government by the courts being twice convicted for corruption and lying to a magistrate court about his intentions to leave politics, would be able to return to his ministerial post.

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Ynet-News, February 28, 2023 – Tuesday

2.28.23 – Tu- - - News Placed in February 28 spot – Tuesday
US State Department expects Israel to prosecute settlers over retaliation riots

2.28.23 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday
7,283 people donate \$291,015 to Palestinian victims of settler riots

2.27.23 – Mo- - - News Placed in February 27 spot – Monday

Settler riot in Huwara leaves 75 PA homes damaged, 35 homes & 95 cars destroyed

2.26.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday

400 settlers riot, set Huwara homes, cars on fire after PA terror attack

2.26.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Two Israelis in car killed from a passing vehicle shooting in West Bank

2.26.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Palestinian ex-convict who converted to Judaism denied Israeli citizenship

2.26.23 – Su- - - News Placed in February 26 spot – Sunday

21 arrested at Tel Aviv anti-judicial reform rally; Netanyahu proposes public dialogue

2.23.23 – Th- - - News Placed in February 24 spot – Friday

Israel strikes Hamas in Gaza weapons depot near mosque, school and clinic