

Ynet-News, March 13, 2023 – Monday

3.13.23 – Mo- - - News Placed in March 10 spot – Friday  
Sans Arab factions Lapid, Gantz, Michaeli & Liberman to boycott judicial votes

3.13.23 – Mo- - - News Placed in March 11 spot – Saturday  
Moroccan king asks Arab countries to stop criticizing cooperation with Israel

3.13.23 – Mo- - - News Placed in March 13 spot – Monday  
2 days after Iran-Saudi-China agreement; Saudi blocks Israel from UN event

3.12.23 – Su- - - News Placed in March 12 spot – Sunday  
Israel strikes weapons depot in Syria, in campaign to stop Iran presence

3.09.23 – Th- - - News Placed in March 09 spot – Thursday  
Saudi seeks US guarantees & nuclear weapons as term for peace with Israel

3.09.23 – Th- - - News spot – Thursday  
Anti-judicial reform protesters up the ante with 'day of resistance' across Israel

3.08.23 – We- - - News Placed in March 08 spot – Wednesday  
PM urges MKs to tamp down tensions & not inflame reservists protesting reform

3.13.23  
Sans Arab factions Lapid, Gantz, Michaeli & Liberman to boycott judicial votes

3.13.23  
Opposition leaders threaten to boycott final votes on judicial overhaul  
Sans Arab parties, opposition factions say will not turn out to vote in Knesset, call for  
'comprehensive and balanced constitutional arrangement' in lieu of 'insane hodgepodge of  
laws'  
Moran Azulay|13:09

Leaders of Israel's opposition parties threatened on Monday to boycott the final votes in  
Knesset on the government's judicial overhaul push as the ruling coalition plows through  
with its legislation blitz.

In a joint statement, Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid, National Unity head Benny Gantz,  
Yisrael Beitenu Chairman Avigdor Liberman and Labor chief Merav Michaeli said "The  
unity of the people begins with real negotiations and as long as the legislation isn't  
stopped, this is all a charade."

The statement of the leaders of the opposition, sans the Israeli parliament's two Arab parties, protested the coalition's move to bring to a vote two key components of its plan to overhaul the judiciary — the so-called override clause, which would allow the legislature to enact legislation that overrides a Basic Law and the rulings of the Supreme Court, and a bill which would require a full Supreme Court panel of 15 justices to strike down laws passed by the Knesset.

"We will do everything to prevent the passing of these laws, but if, God forbid, we get to a third reading, we will not give it a hand and boycott the vote in the plenum," the statement further read.

"Instead of an insane hodgepodge of laws, the suitable alternative at this time is a comprehensive and balanced constitutional arrangement, and fortifying the separation of the branches of government until a constitution is agreed upon."

3.13.23

Moroccan king asks Arab countries to stop criticizing cooperation with Israel

3.13.23

Moroccan palace asks Islamist party to stop criticizing ties with Israel

Pushing back against claims Rabat ignoring plight of Palestinians, royal palace says foreign policy is a prerogative of King Mohammed VI  
Reuters|12:17

Morocco's royal palace on Monday asked the largest Islamist party, the PJD, to stop taking aim at the country's ties with Israel after the party rebuked the foreign minister for defending Israel at the expense of Palestinians.

Renewed violence between Israelis and Palestinians poses a challenge to Arab countries that have normalized ties with Israel.

Morocco resumed diplomatic ties with Israel in late 2020 after a deal brokered by the Trump administration that also included Washington's recognition of Rabat's sovereignty over Western Sahara, a disputed territory where the Algeria-backed Polisario Front seeks to establish its own state.

"The general secretariat condemns the recent stand by the foreign minister in which he appears to be defending the Zionist entity... at a time the Israeli occupation continues its criminal aggression against our Palestinian brothers," the PJD said in a statement last week.

The palace said that foreign policy was a prerogative of the King and it would not be "subject to blackmail".

Since the resumption of ties, Morocco and Israel have signed cooperation agreements, including a defense pact.

Morocco's official position regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been to support the two-state solution, with East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state.

3.13.23

2 days after Iran-Saudi-China agreement; Saudi blocks Israel from UN event

3.13.23

Saudi Arabia blocks Israeli delegation from participating in UN event  
Israelis denied entry by Saudi's to the UN's World Tourism Organization despite being invited by the international body; citizens from Kfar Kama in the Galilee represent one of 32 sites selected as best rural tourist destination  
i24NEWS|06:53

Israeli Muslims invited to attend a United Nations-sponsored tourism event in Saudi Arabia honoring their mountain village have been denied visas, media reported on Sunday.

The Israeli village of Kfar Kama, in the Galilee region, was among the 32 sites selected by the UN as the best rural tourism destinations of the year. The winners were chosen for their cultural and natural assets, as well as their commitment to economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization invited Israeli villagers and officials, along with representatives from 22 countries, to take part in the two-day event held in the Saudi village of AlUla, starting on Sunday. However, the Israelis have never received visas, according to people familiar with the matter, quoted by Bloomberg.

This is despite the call from the United Nations for equal treatment between member states and despite the billions spent by the Saudis to become a major player in the tourism industry.

Kfar Kama was built by Circassian immigrants from the North West Caucasus region in the late 1800s. The town has remained ethnically Circassian ever since. Most of its 3,500 inhabitants are Muslims and speak Circassian as their first language. Like some Bedouins, they serve in the Israeli army.

"The event had high expectations and it is frustrating that we were prevented from attending," Kfar Kama Mayor Zakaria Napso was quoted by the Walla news site as saying.

For its part, the Ministry of Tourism lamented that efforts to facilitate obtaining a visa had failed, adding: "Israel calls on the UNWTO and UN bodies to preserve the guidelines of the UN, including equal treatment by ensuring the participation of States in the organization's events. In this case, the UNWTO has failed to meet these standards, which is regrettable."

This incident comes just two days after Iran and Saudi Arabia announced the restoration of diplomatic relations. The two countries will reopen their embassies in Riyadh and Tehran within 60 days, Iranian media reported, noting that the agreement was reached during a recent meeting in China.

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3.12.23

Israel strikes weapons depot in Syria, in campaign to stop Iran presence

3.12.23

Israeli strikes in Syria kill 2 pro-Iran fighters, war monitor says

Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says alleged Israeli attack 'targeted a weapons depot belonging to pro-Iran forces'

AFP|05:58

Israeli airstrikes targeting a weapons depot in Syria on Sunday killed two pro-Iran fighters and wounded three soldiers, a war monitor said.

"Israeli strikes targeted a weapons depot belonging to pro-Iran forces located between Tartus and Hama provinces," said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

"Two pro-Iran fighters were killed and three Syrian soldiers were wounded," he said. Syrian state news agency SANA, citing a military source, reported that "at around 7:15 am (0415 GMT), the Israeli enemy carried out an air attack, firing missiles from the direction of north Lebanon with targets in the Tartus and Hama countryside." SANA did not specify the target, but said the attack "wounded three soldiers and caused some material losses", adding that Syrian air defences intercepted some of the missiles. The Israeli military said it did not comment "on reports in the foreign media".

Since Syria's civil war erupted in 2011, Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes against its northern neighbour, targeting government troops as well as allied Iran-backed forces and Lebanon's Hezbollah fighters.

The Israeli military rarely comments on individual strikes against Syria, but has vowed repeatedly to keep up its air campaign to stop arch foe Iran consolidating its presence. On Tuesday, Israeli warplanes killed three people in a raid on the airport in Aleppo, Syria's second city, the Observatory said. On February 19, an Israeli airstrike killed 15 people in a Damascus district that houses state security agencies, according to the war monitor.

3.09.23

Saudi seeks US guarantees & nuclear weapons as term for peace with Israel

3.09.23

Saudi Arabia seeks U.S. security guarantees as term for peace with Israel, report  
Officials say striking a normalization deal has become a priority for the U.S. and Israel amid possible confrontation with Iran and its aid to Russia in the Ukraine War; also add that the Palestinian issue was not a priority for Saudi Arabia  
Ynet|Yesterday | 15:04

Saudi Arabia asked the U.S. to provide security assurances and help to develop its civilian nuclear program as a condition for warming ties with Israel, The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday.

According to officials involved in discussions between the two countries, striking a normalization deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia has become a priority for President Biden and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israeli and American officials worry that agreeing to the Saudi demands would assist the Gulf Kingdom in attempts to develop their own nuclear weapon, thereby accelerating the nuclear arms race in the region.

The Biden administration is deeply involved in the complex negotiations, following the looming confrontation with Iran over its nuclear program and military aid to Russia during the Ukraine war, as this move would reshape the Middle East's political landscape. The Saudi demands for security guarantees and nuclear aid are the primary obstacles to a deal, while some Washington lawmakers would likely oppose such measures. There remains caution in Riyadh about striking a deal that would come under fire in the Arab world and exacerbate tensions with Iran, the paper said.

Daniel Shapiro, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel who now focuses on strengthening Israel-Arab world ties as a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council, called a potential deal "a very tough Gordian knot to cut."

"Normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia, facilitated by the United States, is in all three parties' interests," he said. "But that doesn't mean it's easy to arrange."

A Saudi-Israeli deal could also kill the Palestinian hopes of creating an independent state. For decades, the Saudis have said publicly that a Palestinian state is a prerequisite for recognizing Israel.

But Israeli officials say Saudi Arabia hasn't sought significant concessions on the Palestinian issue as part of the talks.

"Discussion of the Palestinians was pretty dismissive," said John Hannah, national security adviser to former Vice President Dick Cheney and a fellow at the Jewish Institute for National Security of America.

Saudi Arabia also faces risks at home if it establishes diplomatic relations with Israel, with polls showing mixed opinions.

Opposition among Saudi citizens to establishing ties with Israel has fallen to 38% in 2022 from 91% in 2014, according to a recent poll by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. But the same poll found that, when Saudis were asked if they openly support normalizing with Israel, only 5% said yes in 2022, compared with 12% in 2016.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has indicated that he wants to see significant support among Saudi citizens before he agrees to any deal, according to people who have met with him to discuss the issue.

3.09.23

Anti-judicial reform protesters up the ante with 'day of resistance' across Israel

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Anti-judicial reform protesters up the ante with 'day of resistance' across Israel

Demonstrators try to cause disruptions around airport as Netanyahu set to travel to Rome; IDF reservists surround HQ of conservative think tank credited for government plan  
Gilad Meiri|03:49

Israeli protesters on Thursday were intensifying their opposition to a contentious government proposal to overhaul the judiciary, with plans to block Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's route to the airport ahead of an official trip overseas and as the U.S. defense secretary was visiting.

In Tel Aviv, thousands were marching along a central boulevard, waving flags and chanting anti-reform and anti-Netanyahu slogans such as "the time has come to overthrow the despot". Protesters blocked a major intersection and police diverted traffic to alternate routes.

IDF reservists in the hundreds gathered in Jerusalem outside the headquarters of conservative think tank Kohelet Policy Forum which is widely credited with masterminding the plan. Protesters were holding up a sign saying "Kohelet Forum tearing Israel".

Five protesters, some of whom are retired senior IDF officers, have been detained by police, prompting organizers to move the protest to the fore of the nearby police station in solidarity.

Protesters also blocked Highway 4 outside the central city of Ra'anana causing massive traffic congestion that lasted long after demonstrators were cleared by police. Hundreds continued to wave Israeli flags on the wayside.

In northern Israel, dozens of sailing boats, kayaks and other small vessels blocked the entrance to the Port of Haifa as part of the protest to prevent trading vessels from making their way in or out of Israel's busiest entrepôt.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Netanyahu is set to travel to Rome with his wife Sarah on Thursday. The premier will be making his way to the airport via helicopter as protesters planned to cause major disruptions around Ben Gurion Airport.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid called on protesters to "refrain from violence and respect the law" but added that was puzzled by the timing of Netanyahu's trip to Italy.

"The protests are of the utmost importance. I will not be attending since it is not a political protest," he said. "This is an opportunity to instill our constitution, in which the Declaration of Independence will be the very first provision. Should the judicial reform pass, there will be no more elections in Israel."

Meanwhile, it also seemed Netanyahu will be received with protests upon his arrival in the Italian capital as an online post called to demonstrate against the Israeli leader's visit at the city's Piazza Santi Apostoli, labeling him a "persona non grata". The post further read "we already have some fascists in Italy".

3.08.23

PM urges MKs to tamp down tensions & not inflame reservists protesting reform

3.08.23

Netanyahu warns MKs against criticizing reservists amid judicial reform row  
PM's remarks come following backlash sparked by two Likud ministers who bashed reservist protesters; 'The task for all of us is to try to tamp down tensions and not inflame them,' he says

i24NEWS|Yesterday | 12:46

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday evening urged lawmakers from his Likud party to stay "within the limits of the relevant discourse" when criticizing reservists who are protesting the government's judicial reform plans.

Earlier this week, two government ministers sparked backlash over their harsh comments against the reservists who are protesting the judicial overhaul by refusing to perform their military duty.

"Refusal is a dangerous phenomenon and should be strongly opposed. But even when doing so, and even in the heat of the moment, it should be done within the limits of the relevant discourse. The task for all of us is to try to tamp down tensions and not inflame them, and this applies to everyone without exception," Netanyahu said.

The premier's remarks were likely addressed to Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi and Information Minister Galit Distel Atbaryan. Karhi said in a Purim post on social media that those who refuse to perform their military duty in protest "can go to hell." A group of reservists showed up at the minister's home on Tuesday, telling him his remarks caused permanent damage.

His fellow Likud member Atbaryan posted on Twitter that "there were soldiers here who took the bones of their brothers out of the grave and did not refuse an order," referring to military rabbis who had to dig up graves from Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip during the 2005 disengagement.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, also of the Likud party, said on Tuesday he supported reserves soldiers, “regardless” of their political stance.

“Those who disparage IDF (Israel Defense Forces) soldiers, from the left or the right, have no place in public service,” the minister said. “I cherish, appreciate, and support the reservists, regardless of their political position.”

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Ynet-News, March 7, 2023 – Tuesday

3.07.23 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

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

3.07.23 – Tu- - - News Placed in March 07 spot – Tuesday

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

3.06.23 – Mo- - - News Placed in March 06 spot – Monday

Syria Aleppo airport damaged in IDF strike for funneling Iranian weaponry

3.06.23 – Mo- - - News Placed in March 05 spot – Sunday

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

3.03.23 – Fr- - - News Placed in March 03 spot – Friday

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

3.02.23 – Th- - - News – Thursday

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

3.02.23 – Th- - - News Placed in March 02 spot – Thursday

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