

Ynet-News, May 03, 2023 – Wednesday

5.03.23 – We- - - News Placed in May 03 spot – Wednesday  
IDF strike Hamas production storage sites, tunnels, military bases & facilities

5.02.23 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday  
IDF measured response to Gaza aggression fails; a wider action will follow

5.02.23 – Tu- - - News Placed – Tuesday  
IDF concerned with Iron Dome 67% performance after Gaza barrage of 22 rockets

5.02.23 – Tu- - - News Placed in May 02 spot – Tuesday  
22 Gaza rockets in Jihad retaliation for death of inmate West Bank commander

5.02.23 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday  
Jihad prisoner dies on hunger strike, PA blame authorities who refused his release

5.01.23 – Mo- - - News Placed in May 01 spot – Monday  
Hezbollah arms depots & trucks destroyed, Syrian airfield is completely out of service

5.01.23 – Mo- - - News – Monday  
US House Speaker McCarthy addresses Knesset plenum on 75<sup>th</sup> celebration

5.01.23 – Mo- - - News – Monday  
Revealed the biggest nuclear secret: This is the 'top spy' that Iran executed

5.01.23 – Mo- - - News Placed – Monday  
Israel: Polls show Netanyahu rivals gain momentum

4.30.23 – Su- - - News Placed in April 30 spot – Sunday  
Ben-Gvir loosens gun licensing for soldiers, policemen and firemen to fight crime

4.30.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday  
IDF officer dismissed after attending right-wing rally in uniform

4.30.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday  
Ultra-Orthodox parties agree to push back contentious draft exemption bill

4.30.23 – Su- - - News Placed in April 29 spot – Saturday  
Netanyahu keeps Florida Governor Ron DeSantis meeting on down-low

5.03.23

IDF strike Hamas production storage sites, tunnels, military bases & facilities

5.02.23

Southern communities given the all-clear after overnight violence

After consultations emergency measures lifted, allowing schools to open and farmers to work fields near border; overnight ceasefire agreement reached with Egyptian, Qatari and UN mediation

Yoav Zitun, Matan Tzuri, Daniel Salami, Einav Halabi | Yesterday | 23:38

Israeli officials on Wednesday said emergency measures in the south were lifted and the residents were given the all-clear to return to routine, including schools, agricultural fields and all other aspects.

Israeli lawmakers U-turn after backing Iran's Azeri minority sparks backlash  
IDF probes into Iron Dome's lackluster performance after another rocket leak

The decision came despite rocket fire early in the morning and after a ceasefire was mediated between Israel and the Islamic factions in Gaza overnight. According to reports in Gaza, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was in discussions with Egyptian and Qatari officials as well as UN Mideast envoy Tor Wennesland, to "bring an end to the Israeli aggression," against the Strip.

Al Jazeera reported the agreement, to end the violence was reached around 4 am, "subject to the commitment of both sides," according to Palestinian officials.

The IDF said it conducted strikes on Hamas targets in Gaza including weapon production and storage sites, underground tunnels, military bases and position and training facilities. Rockets targeted southern cities in including Ashkelon overnight, but no injuries were reported.

The recent round of fighting came after the death of an Islamic Jihad prisoner who was on hunger strike for three months since his arrest last February. Khader Adnan who was charged with terror activity including incitement and was in custody for the duration of his trial, according to Israel, refused any medical intervention, demanding to be released.

Islamic Jihad vowed to retaliate, launching rockets into Israel on Tuesday, resulting in three people wounded and damage to property in Sderot.

5.02.23

IDF measured response to Gaza aggression fails; a wider action will follow

5.02.23

IDF strikes in Gaza after dozens of rockets fired into southern Israel

Over 30 rockets fired from Palestinian enclave during the day after Islamic Jihad hunger striker dies in prison; Israeli officials warn response will be harsher than usual; air raid sirens wail in border communities

Yoav Zitun, Matan Tzuri|Updated:15:49

The IDF carried out a series of strikes on the Gaza Strip Tuesday night after dozens of rockets were fired into southern Israel during the day, prompting two more rocket salvos in response.

After a situation assessment between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and IDF High Command earlier Tuesday, Israeli officials told Ynet that Israel will take a more significant and wider action than usual in response to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, even if it invites a response from Hamas.

Israeli officials added that while Jerusalem is not interested in further escalating the situation, it appears to be on the precipice of a conflict that could extend beyond a single day, potentially lasting for several days.

National Security Minister Itamar-Gvir, who was excluded from the meeting between Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant with IDF top brass, contacted the Prime Minister's Office in a demand to join the meeting but received no response. According to Ben-Gvir, Israel's policy of measured responses to aggressions from Gaza has been a complete failure.

This bout of fresh cross-border violence erupted after Gaza Strip terrorist factions vowed retaliation for the death of Khaled Adnan, a senior operative in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's West Bank arm who died in Israeli prison after an 86-day hunger strike.

Meanwhile, the United Nations' Middle East envoy Tor Wennesland and Egyptian mediators tried to negotiate the release of Adnan's body in exchange for a cessation of rocket fire from the Palestinians. However, Israel objected to surrendering the body.

More than 30 rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip, with the latest barrage of six rockets launched around 9:30pm. One person was moderately wounded and 11 others suffered mild injuries in southern Israel as a result. Some of the projectiles were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system.

First published: 22:52, 05.02.23

5.02.23

IDF concerned with Iron Dome 67% performance after Gaza barrage of 22 rockets

5.02.23

IDF probes into Iron Dome's lackluster performance after another rocket leak

After intercepting just 67% of projectiles fired from Gaza, military concerned about unusually high dud rate for system which routinely boasts a success rate in the high nineties

Yossi Yehoshua|10:28

Israeli citizens have learned to count on the protective umbrella of the Iron Dome to defend them from enemy rockets in times of cross-border strife, but the air defense system's growing fail rate in intercepting incoming threats has raised concern among the Israeli military's High Command.

Palestinian terrorist factions fired a heavy barrage of 22 rockets into southern Israel on Tuesday afternoon.

Six of these projectiles targeted populated areas, and while four rockets were successfully shot down by Iron Dome, two crashed within residential areas in the southern city of Sderot, causing several injuries and property damage. All other sixteen rockets crashed in unpopulated areas, which the system is programmed to ignore.

At 67%, the unusually high leakage rate prompted the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to launch a probe into why an otherwise reliable air defense system, which routinely boasts a success rate in the high nineties, has exhibited such a significant backslide in performance, especially considering the attack from Gaza occurred in broad daylight with high visibility and prior intelligence.

For comparison, in Israel's last cross-border bout with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in the Gaza Strip last summer, during which some 1,100 rockets were fired onto Israeli soil, the system successfully intercepted 96% of incoming threats — the highest such figure recorded in an operational setting to date.

The system has also recorded an abnormally high failure rate during last month's rocket attack on northern Israel.

Thirty-four rockets were fired from Lebanon, and the system was expected to intercept 28 rockets while allowing an additional six to fall in open areas. However, the system failed to intercept three rockets, a 92% success rate.

Tuesday's attack followed shortly after the IDF launched artillery fire in response to a previous rocket barrage from the Palestinian enclave.

The initial attack followed threats of retaliation by the PIJ for the death of Khader Adnan, 45, a commander of its West Bank arm who was found unconscious in his prison cell early Tuesday and was later pronounced dead at the hospital after an 86-day hunger strike. The IDF instructed residents of Gaza border communities to shelter in place amid the cross-border fire exchanges. The order was removed about an hour later.

A collective of Gaza terrorist factions claimed responsibility for the attack and added that "this is a first response" for the death of Adnan.

"We will remain committed to our fallen and our prisoners, and this issue will always remain a top priority," the group said in a statement. "We warn the enemy that any foolish actions they may take will not go unanswered, the resistance is fully prepared." One of the rockets crashed at a construction site in Sderot. A Chinese foreign worker was severely wounded and another two people suffered light injuries from shrapnel.

The Chinese national was taken to Barzilai Medical Center in Ashkelon where his condition later improved and was considered moderate.

Several parking vehicles were damaged by shrapnel. Magen David Adom ambulance service reported that several people suffered from shock, and a 49-year-old woman was lightly injured when she slipped and fell on the way to the bomb shelter.

5.02.23

22 Gaza rockets in Jihad retaliation for death of inmate West Bank commander

5.02.23

Gaza rocket volley hits southern Israel, at least three wounded

IDF instructs residents to remain near shelters as Iron Dome air defense system records worrying fail rate; Islamic Jihad promises retaliation for death in prison of hunger-striking operative; PM to convene consultation with security officials  
Yossi Yehoshua, Yoav Zitun, Matan Tzuri, Itamar Eichne|Updated:09:09

Sirens blared across Gaza border communities on Tuesday afternoon as Palestinian terrorist factions fired 22 rockets into Israel, injuring at least three people to varying degrees.

The attack followed shortly after the Israeli Defense Forces launched artillery fire in response to a previous rocket barrage from the Palestinian enclave.

The IDF instructed residents of border communities to shelter in place amid cross-border fire exchanges. The order was removed about an hour later.

The Iron Dome missile defense system failed to intercept two of six projectiles that targeted populated areas — an unusually high leakage rate for an otherwise reliable air defense system, especially considering the attack occurred in broad daylight with high visibility and prior intelligence. Sixteen rockets crashed in unpopulated areas. The system has also recorded an abnormally high failure rate during last month's rocket attack on northern Israel. The IDF has launched a probe.

One of the rockets crashed at a construction site in Sderot. A Chinese foreign worker was severely wounded and another two people suffered light injuries from shrapnel. The Chinese national was taken to Barzilai Medical Center in Ashkelon where his condition later improved and was considered moderate.

Several parking vehicles were damaged by shrapnel. Magen David Adom ambulance service reported that several people suffered from shock, and a 49-year-old woman was lightly injured when she slipped and fell on the way to the bomb shelter.

Gaza rocket crashes in Sderot street

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was set to convene a meeting with security officials to discuss the deteriorating situation on the southern border.

A collective of Gaza terrorist factions claimed responsibility for the attack and added that "this is a first response" to the death of a Palestinian inmate who died in Israeli prison after a nearly three-month hunger strike.

"We will remain committed to our fallen and our prisoners, and this issue will always remain a top priority," the group said in a statement. "We warn the enemy that any foolish actions they may take will not go unanswered, the resistance is fully prepared."

The Islamic Jihad terrorist group vowed to retaliate for the death of Khader Adnan, 45, a commander of its West Bank arm who was found unconscious in his prison cell early Tuesday and was later pronounced dead at the hospital after an 86-day hunger strike. Riots broke out on the West Bank as Palestinians blamed Israel for the inmate's death, accusations the Israeli prison authorities reject, claiming Adnan had refused medical intervention.

First published: 16:05, 05.02.23

5.02.23

Jihad prisoner dies on hunger strike, PA blame authorities who refused his release

5.02.23

Palestinians riot, prisons on alert after Islamic Jihad member dies

PIJ prison cells remain locked and guards brace for violence, more hunger strikes after Khader Adnan found unconscious in cell and pronounced dead during 3-month hunger strike; Ben Gvir warns, zero-tolerance for prisoner violence

Matan Tzuri, Daniel Salami, Yoav Zitun, Meir Turgeman|04:58

Prison authorities went on high alert on Tuesday after the death of Khader Adnan, who had been on hunger strike since his arrest last February. Protesters marched in Jenin and others clashed with forces in Hebron, as Palestinians accused Israel of responsibility.

Adnan, a senior Islamic Jihad operative from the West Bank city of Jenin, was found unconscious on the floor of his cell in the early morning hours and rushed to hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Fearing prison riots, authorities raised the level of security alert to its highest and increased troop deployment to deal with any eventuality, especially in the wards holding Islamic Jihad prisoners.

Cells remained locked and prison staff were bracing for fires to be ignited, guards to be attacked and more prisoners to announce they too are going on hunger strike. No incidents have been reported thus far.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said he had met with Prison Authority Chief Katty Shitrit earlier in the day to discuss measures that must be taken.

The minister instructed Shitrit to inform "terrorists being held in Israeli prisons," that if they begin a hunger strike, or riot, they will lose some of the conditions granted to them.

"My instructions to the prison authorities is to enact a zero-tolerance policy," Ben Gvir said. "If prisoners chose to be violent, they must be dealt with decisively," he said.

In a court hearing held on Thursday, a military judge said Adnan must take responsibility over the possible repercussions to his health, after he refused medical intervention during his hunger strike.

"A normal society cannot be held hostage by a person threatening to harm himself if his demands are not met," the judge said during Adnan's appeal of his detention. He added that he was not presented any medical opinion indicating the prisoner was in a life-threatening condition. "We call on the prisoner to stop his hunger strike and conduct an effective defense so that we will be able to reach the best judicial ruling in the shortest possible time," the judge said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Palestinian factions in Gaza fired rockets into Israel, falling in open fields and causing no injuries. The IDF launched mortar fire in response.

Khader Adnan, was arrested last February in Jenin and began a hunger strike that lasted 86 days before he collapsed in his cell. Prison authorities said his death was announced after he was found unconscious and rushed to a nearby hospital.

A resident of the West Bank city of Jenin, Adnana was arrested for security forces on suspicion of terror activity and incitement to terror. This was his 13th arrest and 10th detention in jail and as he had previously done, he immediately went on hunger strike and refused any medical intervention.

In 2015, Adnan remained on hunger strike for 56 days, to pressure authorities to release him and had urged other prisoners to do the same.

Last February, Hisham Abu Hawash also a member of the PIJ terror group ended a 140-day hunger strike, protesting his administrative detention after Israel agreed to release him within the month.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said in a statement that Adnan's death was a sad day for Palestinians.

"The occupation, prison authorities and the courts carried out a crime against him, refused to his release and neglected him medically in his solitary confinement, " Shtayyeh said.

#### 5.01.23

Hezbollah arms depots & trucks destroyed, Syrian airfield is completely out of service

#### 5.01.23

Soldier dead, seven wounded in Israeli attack, Syrian state media reports  
Aleppo International Airport out of service due to strike, according to Syrian military source; Syrian opposition says Hezbollah arms depots destroyed

Daniel Salami|17:36

One servicemember has been killed and another seven people, including two civilians, were wounded in an Israeli strike on an airport in the Aleppo area, Syrian state news agency SANA reported overnight Tuesday, citing a military source.

The source added that the airfield was put out of service due to the attack. The Syrian Civil Aviation Authority announced shortly later that the airport in Aleppo, which is also used for military purposes and also receives cargo flights from Iran, was completely out of service and its only runway was closed.

Syrian opposition sources claimed that the targets attacked were related to pro-Iranian proxies around the Aleppo International Airport.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based war monitor, the attack targeted and destroyed Hezbollah arms depots. In addition, the attack was reportedly carried out from the air over Lebanese territory. Several trucks carrying munitions were also reportedly attacked.

This latest strike comes against the background of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's expected visit to the country on Wednesday, the first by an Iranian leader in 13 years. Iran's ambassador to Syria said after Raisi's invitation by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad that he considered his visit of great importance due to regional developments.

Aftermath of Israeli-linked attack in Homs Province

In the past week, Syria has attributed three attacks on its soil to Israel. One of the attacks, which occurred overnight Saturday, reportedly destroyed a Hezbollah arms depot in the Homs Province. The attack came half a day after Iran's foreign minister met with Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah and observed from the Lebanese border with Israel.

Overnight Monday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that Israel had shelled a Hezbollah observation post near the Syrian border. According to the report, over 20 shells were fired at the post located west of the village of Khader in the Quneitra province, but no casualties were reported.

5.01.23

US House Speaker McCarthy addresses Knesset plenum on 75<sup>th</sup> celebration

5.01.23

U.S. House Speaker McCarthy addresses Knesset plenum

California lawmaker's Knesset speech marks only the second time in 25 years that an American congressional leader addresses the Israeli parliament

Sivan Hilaie|08:42

The Knesset's summer session opened with a festive gathering on Monday afternoon, which included a visit from U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy.



The California lawmaker's Knesset speech marked a special occasion as it was only the second time in 25 years that an American congressional leader addresses the Israeli parliament.

McCarthy arrived in Israel on Sunday at the head of a bipartisan congressional delegation. Israeli dignitaries such as President Isaac Herzog, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's wife Sara and Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai, as well as other VIPs, also attended.

While the Israeli government has portrayed McCarthy's visit as a nod to bipartisan U.S. support for Israel as it marks 75 years since its creation, critics say the rare honor given to McCarthy is a pointed jab at Democratic President Joe Biden, who has publicly voiced concern about the Netanyahu government's legal overhaul push.

McCarthy's speech underscores the fraught ties between Netanyahu and the Biden White House, driven in part by the legal overhaul and the nationalistic character of Israel's furthest-right government in its history.

Largely because of it, Biden has so far denied Netanyahu a typically customary invitation to the White House after his election win late last year.

#### 5.01.23

Revealed the biggest nuclear secret: This is the 'top spy' that Iran executed

#### 5.01.23

Revealed the biggest nuclear secret: This is the 'top spy' that Iran executed

Zaki Akbar revealed the existence of Iran's enrichment site at Fordo, providing critical information to West over years, New York Times reports in special investigation; former senior defense official known as religious fanatic and political hardliner – turned British mole, nabbed by Iranian security after Russian intelligence unmasks him

Ynet|05:37

In 2008 a British Intelligence official landed in Tel Aviv to meet with Israeli counterparts and told them that Britain has a mole in the Iranian nuclear program. He informed other Western intelligence agencies of the same.

Following his execution by Iran earlier this year after being convicted of espionage, Alireza Akbari, Iran's former Deputy Defense Minister was revealed as the mole.

According to a New York Times investigative report published on Monday, Akbari's information was the single-most important intelligence revealing the Islamic Republic's underground uranium enrichment facility at Fordo. The paper said present and past diplomats in the U.S., Britain, Germany and Israel as well as diplomats in Tehran, were interviewed for their report.

For years the former defense official who had been a decorated commander of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, lived a double life, appearing as a religious extremist and a political hardliner in public, even after relocating to the UK to begin his private business

dealings. But according to sources, as of 2004 and while still in Iran, he began sharing his country's nuclear secrets with MI6.

European intelligence officials described the information he presented to his British handlers over the years, as important and ultimately seen as critical. It showed clear evidence of Iran's intentions to obtain nuclear capability. Based on that intelligence, world leaders decided to impose strict sanctions on Tehran.

"We were amazed by the information about Fordo, " Yoni Koren, a senior official who served under then-Defense Minister Ehud Barak and had since passed away, said in an interview in 2019. "Britain's great contribution to the combined efforts to gain knowledge of Iran's nuclear program was in the human intelligence they received," he said.

In 2009 then President Barak Obama revealed the true purpose of the Fordo plant.

Intelligence agencies in the West had previously seen satellite pictures showing underground construction but assumed it was a storage facility and were unaware that it had become a secret nuclear site.

Akbari having received British citizenship had traveled back and forth between London and Iran often and in 2019 he was arrested by Iran's security services after they discovered, with the help of Russian intelligence officials, his role in revealing the existence of a nuclear facility in the mountains outside the capital, the paper said quoting two sources with links to the IRGC.

He was also accused of revealing the identity and activities of over 100 officials, including Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, Iran's chief nuclear scientist who was assassinated in 2020, in an attack attributed to Israel.

Akbari's brother, who denied the accusations that he had sold out his country for money, despite his brother's on-camera confessions, said that in 2008, Akbari was arrested on suspicion of spying for Britain and held four months, before high-ranking friends testified on his behalf and the case against him was closed. In that same year, he retired from his official positions.

Last January, Akbari became the highest-ranking Iranian official to be executed since 1982.

### 5.01.23

#### Israel: Polls show Netanyahu rivals gain momentum

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All the polls indicate that it is Gantz who gained the most from the mass protests against the judicial overhaul proposed by the Netanyahu-led right-wing government

i24NEWS|00:44

Had a new Israeli general election been held on Sunday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would have struggled to hammer out a governing majority, according to polls published by several Israeli TV channels.

Ultra-Orthodox parties agree to push back contentious draft exemption bill  
Knesset summer session opens with budget deadline, judicial legislation

Channel 13 News projected Netanyahu's right-wing and ultra-Orthodox bloc would have crashed to a mere 46 seats, 18 fewer than its current 64, while the opposition would win a majority of 62 seats, rather than its current 51

The backbone of Israel's opposition bloc consists of two centrist parties, Benny Gantz's National Unity and Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid. Last year, they formed an unlikely and short-lived governing coalition with Yamina Party leader Naftali Bennett, identified with the religious Zionist right, and a host of smaller parties, including the dovish Labor and Meretz, as well as Ra'am, the first Arab party to become part of an Israeli government. The union of motley ideologies was dictated by a shared anti-Netanyahu sentiment.

All the polls indicate that it is Gantz who gained the most from the mass protests against the judicial overhaul proposed by the Netanyahu-led right-wing government. According to Kan 11 News poll, the Netanyahu bloc would be reduced to 51 parliamentary seats and the Likud, with 28 seats, would be usurped by Gantz's National Unity, with 30, as the biggest party.

The poll by Channel 14 News, a popular right-wing outlet, projected that Likud would remain the single biggest party, with 30 seats; yet the Netanyahu bloc garners 58 seats in this scenario, an insufficient total to form a majority in the 120-seat Knesset.

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4.30.23

Ben-Gvir loosens gun licensing for soldiers, policemen and firemen to fight crime

4.30.23

Ben-Gvir loosens gun licensing in bid to fight surging crime, terror

Decision would lift some bureaucratic burden off recently discharged soldiers, policemen and firemen; move draws ire from gun control advocates who argue firearm proliferation would lead to increased gun violence

Meir Turgeman|14:41

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir on Sunday approved measures that would make it easier for Israeli citizens to obtain firearms as part of his plan to tackle surging crime throughout the country.

According to the new protocol, IDF combat soldiers discharged in the past five years, as well as soldiers on active reserve duty, policemen and firemen will be exempt from interview upon applying for a permit.

Eligible applicants will only have to present medical approval of mental and physical health as well as proof of a clean criminal record from the police.

Applying for a firearm permit is a notoriously long and complicated process, primarily due to a shortage of personnel to process the requests and layers of bureaucratic red tape. The far-right minister has long touted the proliferation of firearms among civilians as an effective tool to address the issue of crime as well as Palestinian terrorism. "We see again and again in many terrorist attacks that there is great importance to armed civilians among us," Ben-Gvir's office said.

"We will do everything we can to release the impasse and allow all those who meet the criteria to get a firearm permit."

However, various human rights groups have strongly criticized the decision, contending that relaxing gun control measures would inevitably result in a surge of gun-related violence.

"Exempting those seeking a firearm license from the obligation to undergo a personal interview reflects a disregard for the risks associated with firearms," the Association for Civil Rights in Israel said.

These are moves that will turn Israel into an even more violent and unsafe place. Ben Gvir's action primarily reflects the failure of the ministry headed by him to combat violence and transfer responsibility for the rampant crime to citizens."

While private gun ownership is still not easily accessible for most Israelis, the debate around the issue often draws comparisons to the United States where it is a constitutionally-protected right.

Gun control advocates in the U.S. are calling for more stringent curbs on the right to bear arms and restricting the ease of access to firearms, which has gained attention due to the frequent occurrence of mass shooting events throughout the country.

4.30.23

IDF officer dismissed after attending right-wing rally in uniform

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IDF officer dismissed after attending right-wing rally in uniform

High-ranking combat officer sentenced to 25 days in military prison and removed from command position after being spotted in uniform and carrying a rifle at pro-judicial reform rally in Jerusalem

Yoav Zitun|11:58

An IDF officer was court-martialed on Sunday after he was spotted attending a protest in support of the government's judicial reform while wearing an army uniform.

Netanyahu points finger at opposition for surging terror, retracts Gallant's firing

The officer's identity was revealed on Friday after a short investigation, and he was sentenced to 25 days in a military prison, as well as being removed from his command position.

The 37-year-old officer, originally from southern Israel, took full responsibility for his actions and admitted to making a mistake. He acknowledged the explicit prohibition of IDF soldiers openly participating in political demonstrations. He previously served as a combat soldier and officer in the Givati Brigade and even held the position of company commander.

The military stated that this is an atypical case of an active-duty officer participating in a demonstration while wearing his uniform, marking the first time this has occurred in the past 17 weeks of nationwide protests.

Last Thursday, about 200,000 people flooded the streets of Jerusalem for a massive right-wing demonstration in support of judicial reform.

4.30.23

Ultra-Orthodox parties agree to push back contentious draft exemption bill

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Ultra-Orthodox parties agree to push back contentious draft exemption bill

Netanyahu allies agree to put controversial legislation on ice while judicial reform drive suspended for fear it would fail to hold up to Supreme Court scrutiny

Kobi Nachshoni | 11:43

The ultra-Orthodox parties informed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday that they will agree to postpone the passage of a highly controversial draft exemption bill for Haredi men until the summer session of the Knesset.

The only potential holdouts could be the leaders of the Hasidic community, represented by the Agudat Yisrael faction within United Torah Judaism (UTJ) Party.

In case the go-ahead to postpone the legislation is granted, the spiritual leaders of Shas, which caters primarily to a constituency of Sephardic ultra-Orthodox and Jews of Middle Eastern descent who live in outlying working-class towns, and Degel HaTorah, the second faction making up UTJ which represents the Lithuanian Haredi community, are also expected to follow suit.

The coalition agreement between the ruling Likud Party and the ultra-Orthodox factions requires the legislation to be completed before the passage of the state budget, which is due at the end of May. However, due to the suspension of the government's push for judicial reform, it is unlikely that such legislation will pass Supreme Court scrutiny.

The government's plan involves lowering the age exemption for Haredim from 26 to 23, eliminating their need to continue yeshiva studies to avoid military service.

Supporters of the plan argue that it will encourage Haredim to join the workforce, while the program also provides significantly greater rewards for those serving in the reserves and military, and proposes changes to the length of service based on a servicemember's role and its importance to the IDF.

The exemption law for ultra-Orthodox men has been at the heart of contention between the closed-off community and their secular compatriots, even leading to the collapse of governments in the past.

The ultra-Orthodox community argues that their young men will find it nearly impossible to maintain their observant lifestyle within a military framework. However, opponents of the law argue that it grants special privileges to one group and discriminates against non-Haredi Jews, for whom military service is compulsory.

4.30.23

Netanyahu keeps Florida Governor Ron DeSantis meeting on down-low

4.30.23

Netanyahu keeps DeSantis meeting on down-low

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis posts meeting held during Israel visit, on Twitter while PMO deviates from years-long practice and fails to refer to it, release photos of the two men together or respond to questions

Itamar Eichner|03:42

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Florida Governor Ron DeSantis on Thursday during his visit to Israel, although the Prime Minister's office did not announce the meeting.

Israel's most: some noteworthy sites, people and events in Israel's first 75 years

AG, Netanyahu attorneys talk road to plea deal

In stark contrast to other meetings with American governors, no pictures were shared on social media or the PM's website. Netanyahu's spokespeople did not comment on the meeting.

DeSantis himself was the one to share the news, posting a photo of the two on his own social media accounts with the caption "It's always fun to see Prime Minister Netanyahu!".

The photo shows that a working meeting took place with the participation of the Chief of Staff for National Security Tzachi Hanegbi, the Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer, and Netanyahu's new political advisor Ofir Fleck.

Why did Netanyahu keep his meeting with Governor Ron DeSantis under wraps? In interviews leading up to the rendezvous, the Prime Minister hinted at the imminent meet-up with the Governor who is reportedly planning a presidential run.

But it seems Netanyahu is being coy, and for good reason, not wanting to stir up any political turmoil in the United States.

With DeSantis touted as a front-runner in the Republican leadership race against former President Donald Trump, and amid frosty relations between Netanyahu and the current US President Joe Biden, it appears the Israeli premier is hedging his bets. It is worth mentioning that Netanyahu has had his fingers burnt before in similar situations.

In 2012, his meeting with the then-Republican presidential nominee, Mitt Romney, was perceived as meddling in the internal affairs of the United States and seen as a bet on Romney's victory over the incumbent President Barack Obama - a move that did not sit well with the latter.

Netanyahu's decision to conceal his meeting with Florida Governor Ron DeSantis may seem odd, given that DeSantis is a legitimate governor of a large US state and a friend of Israel.

However, with Netanyahu's hope for an invitation to Washington, he is likely being cautious not to upset President Biden, especially with DeSantis potentially running against him in the future.

Furthermore, DeSantis convened with influential Republican donors at the Museum of Tolerance on Wednesday, signifying his preparation for a potential presidential campaign. At only 44 years old, DeSantis emerged as a Republican Party figurehead after his sweeping re-election in November of last year as Governor of Florida.

His ultra-conservative ideologies and opposition to COVID-19 restrictions garnered national attention, bolstering his reputation among the party's more far-right members. He has also become known for his anti-LGBT agenda, actively opposing Disney and supporting efforts to limit their rights in Florida.

As early as next month, DeSantis is expected to announce his bid for the Republican Party's nomination, in June. If he does enter the race, it's estimated to be a head-to-head battle with Trump.

Current primary polls show Trump leading by a large margin at around 50%, with DeSantis in second place at about 25%. Mike Pence, Trump's former Vice President, receives about 5% support, while former US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, who has announced her candidacy, only garners about 4%.

In spite of Trump's commanding lead over DeSantis in the current polls, his win in the primaries is not set in stone, and DeSantis may well gain ground once he formally declares his candidacy and takes the stage in televised debates.

The general election polls suggest that both candidates would put up a tough fight against Joe Biden, who recently announced his intention to seek reelection.

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Ynet-News, April 27, 2023 – Thursday

4.27.23 – Th- - - News – Thursday

Palestinian terrorist shot in West Bank ramming rage of IDF troops

4.27.23 – Th- - - News Placed in April 27 spot – Thursday

Haredi rabbis will not rally for overhaul; but see Supreme Court is far from the Shema

4.27.23 – Th- - - News Placed in April 27 spot – Thursday

Ministers Wasserlauf & Ben-Gvir promote a Constitution on Zionist core values

4.26.23 – We - - - News – Wednesday

Knesset opening next week after a mass rally Thursday to support judicial overhaul

4.25.23 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Memorial Day closes & Mount Herzl torch-lighting ushers in 75th Independence Day

4.25.23 – Tu- - - News Placed in April 25spot – Tuesday

UN Council refuses to honor Israel; as PA condemns it as the root of all problems

4.24.23 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Iran providing Russian troops with weapons tools ammunition through the Caspian Sea

4.24.23 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Two years after Mount Meron disaster, insurers unwilling to cover festivities

4.24.23 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Eight hurt in Jerusalem market car-ramming; PA terrorist killed by armed civilian

4.23.23 – Su- - - News Placed in April 23 spot – Sunday

New Navy Corvette warships have 20 Israeli-made systems to protect gas fields  
ining capability