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Netanyahu: We're in midst of terror wave directed by Iran; Security meets Wednesday

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Terrorist drive-by more than 20 bullets, killing 1 and seriously wounding another

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Iron Dome activated against incoming Gaza threat for second day in a row

8.20.23 – Su - - News Placed in August 21 spot – Monday
Orthodox Christian leader furious; no Fire department authorization for Friday feast

8.27.23 – Su
Committee approves inquiry into alleged police abuse of NSO-Pegasus spyware

8.27.23 – Su
Government approves committee of inquiry into alleged police abuse of spy tech
Committee will address issuance of covert surveillance orders and tracking citizens using
technological means despite opposition from security officials and AG
Ynetnews | 14:55

The government on Sunday approved a governmental committee of inquiry into the Israel
Police's alleged abuse of the powerful hacking tool Pegasus.

Despite opposition from security officials and Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara. By
its mandate, the committee will address the issuance of covert surveillance orders and
tracking citizens using technological means.

As reported earlier this month, the findings regarding the NSO-developed Pegasus
software were published, revealing that the police exceeded their authority without
considering the full implications of the surveillance capabilities. This report has matured
into an investigation.

It should be noted that the Shin Bet and the National Security Council opposed this,
fearing the leak of operational secrets.

Meanwhile, the police argued last week that establishing the committee might further
complicate criminal investigations within the Arab community, which are already
challenging.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu left the room to avoid a conflict of interest on the
matter after the attorney general wrote that "the committee raises concerns about
distorting legal proceedings in these cases and undermining the independence of law
enforcement agencies."

As a result, the decision was amended so that the inquiry committee could consult with
the attorney general regarding open cases.

Nevertheless, the attorney general's team faced harsh criticism, accused of a conflict of
interest. Justice Minister Yariv Levin said to the attorney general's representative, "do
you think we're all fools?"

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich added, "there are those here who might become defendants and the legal advisors want to protect them."

8.27.23 – Su

Press minister fires hard-Left manager as her comments on Ben-Gvir support PA

8.27.23 – Su

Press minister fires ministry chief as BDS pounces on Ben-Gvir comments

Far-right firebrand sets off media maelstrom after appearing to justify curbing freedom of movement for Palestinians; Public Diplomacy Minister Galit Distal Atbaryan ejects own appointee after four months, citing 'dissatisfaction with professional performance'

Itamar Eichner | 14:25

Public Diplomacy Minister Galit Distal Atbaryan Sunday evening informed Dr. Gali Sambira, the director-general of her ministry, that she will be relieved of her post due to "dissatisfaction with her professional performance."

Distal reportedly has a new candidate lined up for the role and plans to announce their identity in the coming days.

Sambira's dismissal comes amid one of the biggest public diplomacy crises the current government has faced following a controversial comment by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who argued that "the right for me, my wife and my children to move freely in the West Bank takes precedence over the movement rights of Arabs."

Since appointing Sambira to the role four months ago, Minister Distal has faced criticism from Likud activists who claimed that she had appointed a leftist.

Sambira's explanations and professional qualifications did not help the situation, and tensions between the two grew. Sources close to the minister told Ynet that Distal was not satisfied with Sambira's performance, claiming that she "did not deliver and failed to establish the ministry properly." Therefore, Distal has started to secretly interview new candidates for the job.

The government approved Dr. Sambira's appointment as the director-general of the Public Diplomacy Ministry in early May, despite criticism of her leftist politics. This came after Minister Distal Atbaryan insisted on moving forward with the appointment. On the face of it, the appointment was particularly surprising: Sambira is known as a supporter of the two-state solution and has spoken out against the judicial overhaul.

Two months before Sambira's appointment, Distal had intended to appoint Sharon Uziel Peled for the role, and her appointment was even approved by the civil service appointment committee. However, it was withdrawn for reasons that are unclear. In her new submission to the committee regarding Sambira's appointment, Distal wrote, "The candidate is an excellent organizational woman and, at the same time, a spirited individual whose social and sociological insights impressed me from the very first

moment. She is among the **rare talents** who manage to be liked on both sides of the political spectrum."

The minister further claimed that "Dr. Sambira is highly skilled at managing her subordinates. She has excelled in leading a team of loyal and diligent workers wherever she has worked."

She added that, given the challenges faced by the ministry at this time, she is convinced that the candidate "is the right person in the right place, and I am certain that she will make a significant contribution to the Public Diplomacy Ministry, which is in the process of being established."

Sambira, 51, holds a **doctorate in Gender Studies**, and is a **socially active feminist**, traditionalist and **lesbian**. During her military service, she served as a communications officer.

Over the years, she has led and managed a range of governmental and non-governmental projects in the fields of society, education and the third sector. She was among the founders of the Shahrut Institute for the Advancement of Shared Common Good and served as the CEO of the Yitzhak Navon Association.

She **supports a two-state solution**, and in a post she published last February, she wrote, "We are in favor of two states (is that option still available?) when there is someone to talk to, but it seems that it's not high enough on our agenda. **Maybe instead of a new Middle East, we need both Islam and Judaism to be a little more like Morocco here.**" In that same post, she also made veiled remarks against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Shas Chairman Aryeh Deri, as well as against the opposition. Among other things, she wrote, "We **don't want a prime minister suspected of criminal activity or ministers with indictments**, but we also **don't want a regime led by a single group that thinks it knows what's best** for everyone and claims to be the sole embodiment of democracy and statesmanship **while the rest are just rabble.**"

In **another post she published**, she **expressed concern** about the **government's legal plan**, saying that it is **overly exaggerated** and "could take us to dangerous places **where human rights in Israel will be undermined**. However, I understand that changes in the system must be made and there's no choice but to advance them.

We want reform in the judicial system because it's clear that **someone** there has gotten **confused about the use of power**. Obviously, **dismantling power** requires even more power, but if you could just take a moment to listen to some more nuanced and deep voices and stop threatening us with a civil war."

8.27.23 – Su

Israel and Libya ministers first step meet in Rome to normalize; criticized by terrorists

8.27.23 – Su

Turning a new leaf: Israel's foreign minister and Libyan counterpart make history in secret meeting

Eli Cohen meets secretly in Rome with his Libyan counterpart Najla Mangoush; This marks the first-ever meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries, which have no official diplomatic ties

Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi | 10:45

Foreign Minister Eli Cohen had a confidential meeting with his Libyan counterpart Najla Mangoush last week in Rome, Italy.

The meeting was mediated by Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani. This marks the first-ever meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries, which have no official diplomatic ties. Foreign Ministry Director-General Ronen Levi was also present.

The ministers discussed the historical ties between the two nations, the heritage of the Jews of Libya, the possibility of collaboration between the countries and Israeli humanitarian aid.

According to Cohen, "This historic meeting is a first step in the relationship between Israel and Libya. Libya's size and location give the relationship enormous significance and huge potential for the State of Israel."

He added, "I spoke with the minister about the immense potential for both countries, which also includes renovating synagogues and Jewish cemeteries in the country." Most of the Jewish community in Libya emigrated to Israel starting from the 1930s and in the early years following the establishment of the state. In the past decade, Israel and Libya have had covert contacts through the Foreign Ministry and the Mossad.

Minister Mangoush, 50, is the first woman to hold this position in Libya. She began her political career following the ousting of former President Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. She has been serving as foreign minister since March 2021 in the Western-backed Libyan government in Tripoli, under Prime Minister Abdul Hamid al-Dbeibah. Mangoush was born in the United Kingdom and moved back to Libya with her family when she was six. She studied at EMU University in Virginia, specializing in conflict resolution. Cohen summarized their meeting and thanked the Italian foreign minister "for hosting this historic meeting in Rome." In addition, he stated that "we are engaging with a range of countries in the Middle East, Africa and Asia with the aim of expanding Israel's circle of peace and normalization.

The Islamic Jihad terrorist group starkly criticized the between Cohen and Mangoush. "We sharply condemn the normalization meeting between the Zionist foreign minister and the foreign minister of Libya. This meeting represents a dangerous retreat from the values of the nation and a plunge into the quagmire of normalization. We trust that the people of Libya do not accept such meetings," the statement read.

Gallant & IDF target PA leader hiding in Beirut promising to continue terror

8.27.23 – Su

Netanyahu threatens Hamas leader behind uptick in terror attacks

Saleh al-Arouri is believed to be behind the Hamas Gaza strategy to ignite West Bank violence in order to destabilize the Palestinian Authority and Israeli security while remaining outside the cycle of violence

Liran Tamari|07:09

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday made an explicit threat against a senior member of the Hamas terror group, who resides in Lebanon. "He knows well why he and his friends are in hiding," Netanyahu said referring to Saleh al-Arouri, the deputy leader of the Hamas political executive and the man seen as responsible for the group's military forces in the West Bank.

"Hamas and other proxies of Iran understand that we will fight their attempts to promote terror attacks against us in the West Bank, Gaza and anywhere else," Netanyahu said at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting. "Anyone who attempts to hurt us, finance or organize terror attacks against Israel will pay a price in full," he said.

"We are facing a wave of terror from outside and from within. These are not simple times, they are challenging times. We must unite our forces against the terror, the crime wave in the Arab sector and the internal and external threats, organized to a great extent by Iran through its proxies. Together we will overcome all of them," Netanyahu also said.

Palestinian terror groups have warned recently that violence will increase after the government agreed to authorize Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, to "target terrorists and those who send them," which the Palestinians view as a threat to assassinate senior leaders.

According to reports in Arab media, after the threats made by Israel, terror groups raised the security measures in Gaza and Lebanon to an unprecedented level. The Lebanese Al Akhbar newspaper, which is aligned with the Iran-backed Hezbollah group, reported on Sunday that Egypt was involved in extensive talks aimed at preventing military conflict. According to their report, National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi refused to commit that Israel will adhere to agreements reached after the May 2023 fighting in Gaza, while the Palestinian factions refused to agree to stop terror attacks on the West Bank and added a strong warning that any targeted killing carried out by Israel would prompt an "unprecedented response."

Al-Arouri, who is believed to be behind Hamas activity on the West Bank, is considered to be one of the senior operatives on Israel's target list. He was designated a terrorist by the United States in 2018.

"There are those in Israel who seek a regional war and those who are considering steps that would lead to one," he said in interviews given in recent days. "Anyone who is considering a targeted killing knows it would lead to a regional war," he told the Hezbollah-affiliated Al Mayadeen television channel.

Despite the perceived threats from the government, Al-Aruri promises to continue backing terror attacks against Israelis. On Saturday, Hamas claimed responsibility for the murder of a father and son in the town of Huwara last week. A spokesperson for the group said members of the Hamas military wing were "in the heart of the battle on the West Bank."

Al-Aruri said that the best model to deploy is one of direct engagement with settlers and the IDF. "Hundreds are participating in the resistance and causing confusion for the occupation. What if those hundreds turn to thousands and tens of thousands?"

He also expressed his pleasure over the fact that some of the terrorists were lone actors who were not affiliated with any organization and decided independently, to take action. "We will not be slaves to the occupation," he said. "I am optimistic when unaffiliated individuals are behind attacks," he said.

But Israeli officials believe his bravado and his recent comments indicate his concern that he may be targeted for assassination. They say he is in the crosshairs because he is believed to be behind efforts to ignite an uprising in the West Bank and is responsible for the recent terror wave that has claimed the lives of 35 Israelis since the beginning of the year, as well as some 480 attempted attacks that have been foiled.

Al-Aruri holds many titles but his most important role is head of the Hamas military wing in the West Bank. The group's strategy is concentrated on that region, in order to destabilize the Palestinian Authority and Israel's security. It also allows Hamas in Gaza to remain out of the cycle of violence, while building its economic fortitude and rebuilding its military might. Al-Aruri has a central role in executing this strategy and uses incitement, funds and the enlistment of operatives to that end from his residence in Beirut.

8.25.23 – Fr

Netanyahu backs minister claiming Jewish rights trump those of Palestinians

8.25.23 – Fr

Netanyahu backs minister after claiming Jewish rights trump those of Palestinians

In a statement, Netanyahu offers an explanation of Ben-Gvir's intentions in comments described as racist, despite condemnations by the U.S. and the EU and criticism from unnamed Israeli officials

Itamar Eichner|08.25.23 | 13:18

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday, failed to condemn statements made this week by his National Security Minister, claiming he and his family's rights to travel safely on West Bank roads precedes the rights of Palestinians for free movement.

"Unfortunately, Palestinian terrorists take advantage of this freedom of movement to murder Israeli women, children and families by ambushing them at certain points on different routes," Netanyahu said. "In order to prevent these heinous murders, Israel's security forces have implemented special security measures in these areas. This is what Ben-Gvir meant when he said the right to life precedes freedom of movement,"

Netanyahu said in a statement he released two days after the minister's comments but

added that the **freedom of movement** of Jews and Palestinians in the West Bank, **would be maintained.**

The minister was interviewed **days after a mother of three**, from a West Bank settlement was **murdered** and another wounded **in a terror attack near Hebron.**

The international rebuke of what was described as inflammatory and racist. statements, continued, while Israeli leaders, including Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, Foreign Minister Eli Cohen and President Issac Herzog, have said nothing.

The **U.S. State Department** denounced Ben-Gvir's comments

"We **condemn all racist rhetoric**; as such messages are particularly damaging when amplified by those in leadership positions and are incongruent with advancing respect for human rights for all."

"The values of democracy and respect for human rights stand central to the **EU-Israel** partnership, including as regards the **people living under occupation** in the Palestinian territory," the EU said in a statement on Friday.

On Thursday, American model Bella Hadid who is a vocal critic of Israel and a supporter of the Palestinian cause, posted a clip of Ben-Gvir's comments to her 60 million followers.

Officials who were not named said **Ben-Gvir caused** untold **harm** to Israel and handed the BDS proof for their claims that Israel is an **apartheid state** and Nic Kaufman, an Israeli attorney who works at the International Criminal Court in the Hague said the minister admitted that the policy he intends to advance is conclusively one of apartheid.

"According to **international law** and the International Criminal Court (ICC), **Ben-Gvir is** calling for a **systemic regime of oppression** and the **power of one race over another in the occupied territories,**" he said.

Ben-Gvir said on Friday that he **would not apologize or retract his comments.** He and other far-right members of the coalition publically criticized the senior command of the IDF for what they described as a **failure to end terror attacks on the West Bank.**

Settlement Minister Orit Stroke went so far as to accuse the military of working outside their authority, like the "Wagner Group," although she quickly retracted that statement.

Netanyahu had not been quick to back Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi or his commanders waiting days before releasing a **statement** on behalf of himself and his Defense Minister, in which he said that the **IDF and the Shin Bet were working diligently to foil terror attacks.**

8.24.23 – Th

Netanyahu brief on military: about 100 reservists protest serving a dictatorship

8.24.23 – Th

Netanyahu briefed on operational military situation: 'No impairment of military readiness'
Defense Minister Yoav **Gallant** and IDF Chief of Staff Herzl **Halevy** update the prime minister on the "security situation and the competence of the IDF;" Military reserve

officers claim: 'There is already an impairment of competence, they are trying to minimize it'

Yoav Zitun, Yael Ciechanover|11:34

"There is already damage to the competence of the Air Force, unequivocally, even though they are trying to minimize it." This is according to more than 160 members of the operational headquarters in the Israeli Air Force reserve, who decided to stop volunteering their service as a protest against the continued movement forward of judicial overhaul legislation.

The announcement caused a stir in the Air Force and, as the stream of messages continued from reservists in other military forces threatening to terminate their voluntary service, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant earlier on Wednesday announced that he and Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi met this week with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to update him on the country's military readiness.

"The minister of defense and the chief of staff presented to the prime minister a picture of the security situation and the competence of the IDF," the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

They told him that, based on the fact that so far the number of officers and pilots who have officially notified the military that they will no longer volunteer for service is only about 100, as of now there is no impairment of the army's competence for war. The tripartite meeting was held on Monday without advisers present. Currently, there is no prospect of another meeting between the prime minister, the minister of defense and the chief of staff on the issue, but updates are constantly being sent to the offices of Netanyahu and Gallant. Currently it seems that Gallant does not intend to repeat his decision in March to publicly call for the judicial overhaul legislation to be stopped, and prefers to continue to place public pressure, together with Halevi, on the reservists, telling them that they must continue to report for their volunteer service.

The service of staff members, including officers with the rank of lieutenant colonel, is at the heart of the Air Force. They are saying: "We have been debating about this for several months, we have stopped sleeping quietly since the attempted dismissal of Gallant, and the straw that broke the camel's back is the reasonableness legislation and the non-convening of the committee for selecting judges."

In contrast to the active reserve pilots who are avoiding talking to the media but are in continuous contact with Air Force Commander Tomer Bar, most of whom believe that he will manage the crisis, the staff members are mostly disappointed with Bar. "The conversation with the Air Force commander was one of the hardest conversations we have had in our lives, and the choice not to volunteer is the most difficult decision we have made," the Air Force staffers say.

Bar "chose to represent the political, 'state' echelon, and not us and our hardships. We are experiencing an attack from politicians and senior military officials, and this only strengthens the decision to suspend volunteering," according to them. The decision not to

reveal their names in the media is, they say, due to "the reluctance to turn the already difficult decision into a yellow journalism thing."

The veterans of the special operations units also say that there is an attempt to minimize the extent of the damage to the IDF's competence. "The army and the government are trying to count trees and ignore the forest. It's probably convenient for all parties, except for the state," they say, adding that "reducing the matter to a head count – that is, who is reporting or not reporting for duty this week or next week – is marginal and completely unimportant."

"The special operations system, which is one of the most critical and sensitive of the security systems, is a system built on tradition, on family, on knowledge and experience accumulated over many years. All of these have seriously cracked in recent months, and there is no doubt that if the coup continues – it is only a matter of time before this is manifested in the departure of people even from active-duty permanent forces," they said. "The chief of staff and the head of the IDF know the truth – that without democracy, the special operations system will become like (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's – submissive and obedient, made up of weak personnel and built on lies. This is a price that the State of Israel cannot afford," according to the special operations reservists.

Tuesday night's dramatic announcement by the officers of the Air Force headquarters caused a stir there, and Bar sent an internal and unusual message to his senior commanders – calling on them to order the reservists to continue to report for service. A senior reserve officer in the Air Force warned last night that: "This is a severe blow to the soldiers' control capabilities, both in the Air Force's command center and also to the representatives of the force in the military command center, as these war rooms rely heavily on reservists."

The senior officer in the reserves emphasized that "not all reserve personnel are involved in this matter, as most senior commanders, who serve as control center commanders, have yet to announce their resignation."

"Nevertheless, for those who have announced their resignation, there is no replacement. Their expertise, both in their original military occupation – combat pilots, helicopter pilots, transport pilots, intelligence operatives and control center operators – as well as in their experience in the control centers, cannot be replaced. Young pilots cannot take their place. Their absence from reserve duty may significantly reduce the number of operations the IAF can conduct," he also said.

At the same time as the upheaval in the Air Force, reservists in a number of other units are now threatening to escalate their protest against the judicial overhaul. On Wednesday morning, hundreds of reservists from ground forces units, most of them from infantry brigades alongside special infantry units, announced that they intend to sign together a document suspending their reserve service.

They emphasize that they will stop their service immediately, and not only after the final approval of the cancellation of the reasonableness cause. The mass signing - in a step that further escalates the reservists' protest - will be held according to an announcement published Wednesday morning by the organizers of the event at 6 p.m. in the plaza of the Tel Aviv Museum, in front of the Kyria base defense headquarters. "We have reached the

red line. We have nowhere else to retreat. Our decision is firm: we will not serve a dictatorship," they said.

8.24.23 – Th

Smotrich plan to bolster settlements; US urges to refrain promotion of outposts

8.24.23 – Th

Smotrich plan to bolster settlements, put on ice

The government will not consider the plan to bolster settlements by allotting 700 million shekel after Shin Bet, National Security council concerns and after American criticism; Stroke says

Itamar Eichner|09:46

A plan to bolster Jewish settlement on the West Bank to the tune of 700 million shekels, will not be advanced by the government at this time, officials said, citing concerns raised by the Shin Bet and the National Security Council.

The ambitious plan that was authored by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and his party member Settlement Minister Orit Stroke was revealed last week and presented as a need to strengthen Jewish settlements and the lives of their residents amid the rise in terror attacks.

Sources said the plan would not be brought to the government for approval after the U.S. indicated its discontent. The American embassy did not deny the reports. "We do not comment on private diplomatic conversations," the embassy told Ynet. The National Security Council said there is still work that must be done before the plan can be considered.

Officials close to Stroke said that they are continuing work on the plan and that the minister met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in recent days, to finalize details of it. Sources in the Religious Zionist Party said the plan will be brought to the government in its next meeting on Sunday and would be advanced "especially now when we see how important it is to strengthen resilience in Judea and Samaria."

Smotrich who serves as a minister with authority over the West Bank, in the Defense Ministry intended to finance several projects in the region with a budget of 700 million shekel to be transferred by the end of 2024.

Some aspects of the plan were agreed on in the coalition agreement signed by Netanyahu and would need funds diverted from other projects. A third of the funding was to come from Stroke's ministry and the rest from the budgets of the Finance and National Security ministries.

The U.S. State Department said last week that settlement expansion undermines the geographic viability of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "It incites

tensions and further harms trust between the 2 parties and we strongly oppose the advancement of settlements and **urge Israel to refrain** from this activity including the **promotion of outposts**," Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel said.

8.22.23 – Tu

After 2 deadly attacks in 2 days, security cabinet meets to change this equation

8.22.23 – Tu

After 2 deadly attacks in 2 days, security cabinet meets

Prime minister **moves meeting forward several times over increasing tensions** and rising **violence in the West Bank**; during meeting attended by Defense Minister Gallant and other security officials **cabinet approves a 'series of decisions to strike at the terrorists and whoever dispatches them'**

Itamar Eichner, Yoav Zitun|08:57

Following the terrorist attack in Huwara, in which Shai Silas Nigreker and his son Aviad Nir were murdered, and a second attack in Hebron Mount, in which Batsheva Nigri was killed and Aryeh Gottlieb was seriously injured, the security **cabinet convened** on **Tuesday** after pushing forward the date **from the planned September 10**.

"The Security Cabinet made a **series of decisions to strike at the terrorists and whoever dispatches them, and authorized** the Prime Minister and the Defense Minister **to act accordingly**," according to a statement released by the Prime Minister's Office at the end of the meeting.

The statement also said that the Security Cabinet **"backs the commanders and soldiers of the IDF** and the personnel of the security services **in their actions against terrorist elements on behalf of the security of the citizens of Israel."**

Defense Minister Yoav **Gallant** held a situation **assessment** on Tuesday with IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi and Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar, **focusing** on the security forces' **actions following the recent terror attacks in the West Bank**.

Gallant commended security forces for apprehending the terrorists who carried out the shooting attack at Mount Hebron and for their actions against terror. The situation assessment was joined by Defense Ministry Director-General Eyal Zamir; head of the IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate Maj. Gen. Aharon Haliva; and other senior security officials.

During the security cabinet meeting, confrontations arose between Gallant and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who **demande**d the **placement of roadblocks on West Bank roads and a return to closures**, as well as targeting of threats in the area. **Ben-Gvir** also **demande**d that the **conditions of security prisoners in the prison be downgraded**. Gallant expressed opposition to the moves, **noting** that "there is a **danger of friction**, and we need to pay attention to that. Once it was a few dozen and today it is already hundreds.

An event leads to an event." Ben-Gvir attacked in response: "I feel like I'm living in a movie. People have been murdered and you keep talking about the danger of friction." The cabinet agreed to hold another discussion about the conditions of the security prisoners.

Meanwhile, Gallant attacked Ben-Gvir for claiming that "the IDF is not doing its job," and saying that the defense minister "cares more about the soldiers than the security of the residents." Gallant firmly replied, saying that "thousands of IDF and Shin Bet soldiers have been operating in a heightened manner in recent weeks, among other things to ensure the safe travel of some of the ministers and members of the Knesset to the positions from which they insulted the commanders of those fighters themselves. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Monday that the security cabinet's meeting would be advanced to the beginning of next week, and sources in his office noted the decision was made due to the security situation.

Several hours later, Netanyahu announced that the meeting would be moved to Wednesday, but then announced once again that the meeting would take place on Tuesday. At the start of the regular Cabinet meeting on Sunday, Netanyahu devoted only 35 seconds to the deadly attack that occurred in Huwara. He sent his condolences to the families of the victims, promised to apprehend the terrorist "sooner than he thinks" – and then carried on.

In his speech, Netanyahu refrained from mentioning that the attack occurred against the backdrop of a wave of terrorism currently felt in Israel, during which 35 people were killed and around 140 were injured in 2023 alone.

"The crisis began in 2022. We're all responsible for this harsh outcome. We aren't providing the necessary security to the people of Israel," said Likud Knesset member Avihai Boaron in referencing the terror attack at Mount Hebron.

"An axiom being repeated says the solution is to strengthen the Palestinian Authority, which is a fertile ground for terrorist activity," he also said. "I'm not in a rush to dismantle it, but is it right to strengthen it? In hindsight, we didn't achieve the desired results, and everything should be done to change this equation."

Lawmaker Ohad Tal of the Religious Zionism party told Ynet that "the government needs to take responsibility and change the current reality." According to Tal: "The government hasn't completed its mission and hasn't done what the Israeli public expects of it. We need to correct our actions and our way forward."

"We're living in a strange reality, and we need to inspect ourselves and the promise of security we gave to the Israeli public during the elections," he added.

8.22.23 – Tu

Settlers hurl rocks, spray tear gas, at troops after terror attack

8.22.23 – Tu

Settlers hurl rocks, spray tear gas, at troops after terror attack
Settlers burn tires on major road as troops arrive and hurling rocks at Palestinians passing through; one officer receives minor injuries
Yoav Zitun|05:14

Jewish settlers burned tires and clashed with security forces in the West Bank late on Monday hours after a deadly terror attack near Hebron that resulted in the murder of Batsheva Nigri.

Security forces arrived at the scene of rioting settlers near the Palestinian city of Ramallah and came under attack from stones and tear gas, causing at least one of their number to be injured. One settler was arrested and taken in for questioning. settlers also hurled stones at Palestinians in the area, but no injuries were reported.

Members of the coalition accused the IDF and the security forces of responsibility for the fatal attack after similar accusations were made following previous acts of terror. Settlement Minister Orit Strock went so far as to accuse the Chief of Staff and senior IDF commanders of preferring the comfort of Palestinians, over the safety of the settlers. She even compared the top military brass to the renegade forces of the Russian Wagner group, although she later apologized for her words. Security forces arrested two Palestinians, described as members of the same Hebron family, in connection with the deadly terror strike.

In a joint statement issued by the military, the Shin Bet and the police, the suspects were said to have not resisted their arrest and that the gun allegedly used in the attack was found as well. The two men were transferred to the Shin Bet for further questioning.

Security officials believed the men had been assisted by some family members but their immediate family appeared to be unaware of their intention to commit the attack.

8.21.23 – Mo

Israel strikes targets on Damascus outskirts, where Iranian arms convoy arrived

8.21.23 – Mo

Israel strikes targets on Damascus outskirts, Syrian state media reports

According to reports, multiple explosions heard in Syrian capital's area; Syrian defense ministry says Israel carried out attack from Golan Heights, Syrian soldier injured in strike
Daniel Salami|17:46

Israel struck targets on the outskirts of Damascus, Syrian state news agency SANA reported Monday night.

According to Syrian reports, multiple explosions were heard in the capital city's region. The Syrian defense ministry stated that Israel carried out the attack at 11:05pm from the direction of the Golan Heights, and that a **Syrian soldier was injured** in the strike.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a London-based opposition war monitor, reported that **Syrian air defense** systems were **activated** in response to the Israeli attack, **attempting to intercept** the missiles. The watchdog also reported that this was the **23rd Israeli strike since the beginning of the year**, and that the **Israeli missiles hit at least three Russian military sites**.

According to reports from Syria, the Israeli strike **targeted** an area **near Damascus Airport** and the Al-Kiswah region, both of which Israel is alleged to have **attacked several times in the past**. According to foreign media, both locations are known **sites used by Iran and Hezbollah** operatives in the region, often utilizing the infrastructure of the Syrian army. The watchdog later reported that targets in **southern Damascus were also hit**. Saudi TV channel Al-Hadath cited a source claiming that the Israeli attack was against an **Iranian arms shipment that had arrived at Damascus Airport before the convoy had departed**. The Russian news agency Sputnik in Arabic reported, citing a senior security source, that **"Israeli fighter jets fired missiles at several targets in the Damascus area**. Syrian air defense systems managed to intercept some of these missiles."

Residents in the area reported that fragments from one of the air defense missiles fell in a residential neighborhood. The Syrian newspaper Al-Watan, which is close to President Bashar al-Assad's regime, reported that **Damascus International Airport** is operating as usual and was **not damaged in the attack**.

Last week, Sputnik reported that Israel had carried out an attack in Syria, even though the Syrian authorities did not comment on the report. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights claimed the attack was carried out using a **ground-to-ground missile, targeting a Hezbollah arms depot**.

Syrian media reported on the following **Sunday around 4:30am about loud explosions** heard in the **Damascus area and its surroundings**. For **several hours, unlike most previous instances**, no further details were provided. However, shortly after 8:00am, Sputnik reported that it was the Israeli Air Force that had launched the attack in the Damascus area.

A week earlier, Syrian air defense systems were activated against an Israeli attack near Damascus. This was the first reported airstrike in Syria since hundreds of reserve pilots and officers announced they would not report for reserve duty after the government successfully passed part of its controversial judicial reform.

A Syrian military source stated, "Around 02:20, the **Israeli enemy launched an aerial attack** from the direction of the occupied Syrian Golan. The attacks targeted several locations in the Damascus city area. Our air defense systems intercepted the missiles and shot down several of them. Four soldiers were killed and another four were injured in the attack, and there was damage to property."

8.21.23 – Mo

Mother of fallen IDF soldier, humiliated at protest supporting judicial overhaul

8.21.23 – Mo

Mother of fallen IDF soldier spat on, humiliated at protest

Hagit Rhein, who lost her son in the Second Lebanon War, says she's still hurt from an incident where she was spat on by an onlooker while protesting insubordination in the military

Sivan Rahav-Meir|13:58

Hagit Rhein, mother of Maj. Benaya Rhein who fell in the Second Lebanon War, was spat on in the face on a street in Tel Aviv.

I recently wrote about women with head coverings being targeted on the street. I had some testimonies, and I regretted every email I received in response. These are still just extremists, I told myself, people living on society's fringes.

It's like taking a bus driver who shouted at girls for the way they're dressed seriously. It's not worth giving it attention. But these comments don't stop. It's a sad and ugly phenomenon, even if the media neglects to report it, and other incidents are reported instead.

"I'd prefer not to talk about it," Hagit told me at first. "I'm made to be a peacemaker, I want to diffuse the sparks. After all, Uri, [author] David Grossman's son, was also in the tank where Benaya was killed. I have been talking about both of them in my lectures for 17 years already, since the war."

Ultimately, she agreed to recount her story. She came to Tel Aviv for a demonstration carrying an Israeli flag. They sang Hebrew songs, Avigdor Kahalani spoke and then someone came over and asked her if the protest was for or against the judicial overhaul. Hagit didn't finish her sentence, she just began saying that she came because she's against insubordination, and she was spat on, after which swears were also directed at her.

"It happened a few months ago, and I still feel that I haven't recovered from that insult. I can still feel it. I froze on the spot, as if attacked. I was so hurt that I didn't talk about it at first. I left and went back to my car humiliated. The road seemed endless to me. And then I sat down and tried to breathe deeply until I calmed down a bit," she says.

"I remembered how my mother used to tell me that in Poland, she would be spat on while heading to school and have 'dirty Jew' shouted at her in Polish. And here I am in Israel, and a Jew is spitting on a fellow Jew?"

After that, she messaged me on WhatsApp. "I really wish we could keep things calm. I don't hate those who spat on me. I'm hurt, but I don't hate. I know from experience that once you truly know someone - you love them. We all need to be responsible adults, to push this extremism aside."

8.21.23 – Mo

Netanyahu: We're in midst of terror wave directed by Iran; Security meets Wednesday

8.21.23 – Mo

Netanyahu: We're in midst of terror wave directed by Iran

PM says 'We are working around the clock to apprehend the murderers and those attempting to kill Israeli citizens' after fatal West Bank shooting attack; Gallant also lays blame on Tehran

Yoav Zitun, Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi, Itamar Eichner|Updated:12:42

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday that Israel was "in the midst of a terror wave that is encouraged, directed and funded by Iran and its proxies," following a fatal drive-by shooting attack that left an Israeli woman dead near the West Bank city of Hebron.

"We are working around the clock to apprehend the murderers and those attempting to kill Israeli citizens," Netanyahu said from the scene of the attack. "We have captured all of them," he further declared, overlooking the terrorist who killed Meir Tamari in the settlement of Hermesh in late May.

The prime minister added, "We will also capture the terrorists responsible for today's attack, but it's important to understand that part of this wave of terror comes from external instigation." Netanyahu further stated, "We are employing both offensive and defensive measures to deal with the killers and their senders, both near and far."

He praised the soldiers and commanders operating in the field and emphasized that "we all need to support them."

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who arrived at the scene with Netanyahu, said, "On behalf of Israel's defense establishment, I would like to send my sincere condolences to the families of those who were murdered [in the terror attack that took place today]. It is important to understand the significant change that is taking place on the ground - it is related to Iranian funding, and to the proliferation of weapons under the Iranian directive. Iran seeks every means to harm the citizens of Israel.

We will reach the terrorists, and we will take additional action in order to ensure the security of Israel's citizens, while exacting a price from those responsible for any harm." Earlier, IDF Central Command chief Maj. Gen. Yehuda Fox said on Monday that Israel is facing a major terror wave, the likes of which it hasn't seen in a long time.

"We are in a terror wave unlike anything we've seen in a long time," Fox told reporters at the military's Judea Regional Brigade base near Hebron. "The IDF and security forces are operating daily to thwart acts of terror in villages, towns and refugee camps.

"Most of the time, we succeed; however, today and this week have been challenging, and we were unsuccessful. We will pursue the enemies relentlessly, from Huwara, Hebron and everywhere else, and hold them accountable," he added, referring to an Israeli father

and son who were gunned down and killed at a car wash in the Palestinian town of Huwara over the weekend.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Netanyahu brought forward the meeting of the Security Cabinet, which was already rescheduled for this upcoming Sunday, and will be held on the coming Wednesday due to concerns about additional terrorist attacks.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, the military wing of Fatah, claimed responsibility for Monday's attack in the Hebron Hills in which Batsheva Nigri, 40, was killed in front of her daughter, and Aryeh Gottlieb, 39, who was driving them, was seriously wounded. IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi arrived at the scene of the attack to conduct a preliminary investigation and situational assessment, along with Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar, Fox and Judea and Samaria Division Commander Brig. Gen. Avi Bluth.

Maj. Gen. Fox further said that an initial investigation into the shooting revealed that soldiers at a nearby guard post did not recognize the unfolding attack and consequently failed to respond.

"They didn't have enough time to assess the situation on the ground. We'll learn from this, as we're still in the early stages of the investigation. At first glance, it doesn't seem like there was an issue with the soldiers," he said.

Regarding the recent escalation, Fox added, "The current situation is the responsibility of the terror organizations, primarily Hamas and Islamic Jihad. No one is restricting our operations or the means we use. We've thwarted many attacks in the past year, both in the Hebron area and in the northern West Bank."

In unusual move, Fatah military-wing claims attack

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades released a statement declaring that the attack was a "natural response to the crimes and arrogance of the occupation", coinciding with the anniversary of the 1969 Al-Aqsa Mosque fire. "In honoring our martyrs' souls, we see resistance as a strategic choice," the statement read.

In recent years, the group hasn't been as active as its other Palestinian counterparts, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, in recent months, and is coping with the loss of the Lion's Den — an offshoot of the Al-Aqsa Brigades which suffered heavy casualties during the IDF's recent operations in Nablus.

This organization acts as the military wing of the Fatah movement, led by Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas. However, Fatah decided in 2005 to move away from armed struggle, favoring negotiation and diplomacy. Today, there are members within Fatah who dissent from Abu Mazen's approach toward Israel and the world, like his deputy, Mahmoud Al-Aloul, who advocates for violent resistance.

Though Abbas opposes their actions, the Palestinian leader doesn't sideline them; they continue to be present, armed, and dispersed throughout the Authority's territories. Batsheva Nigri, a mother of three from Beit Hagai, was killed while hitchhiking. She was fatally shot in front of her 6-year-old daughter, who was unharmed, and alongside the

car's driver, Aryeh Gottlieb, who was driving them and was severely wounded. She worked as a preschool teacher in the settlement of Efrat where her family lives.

"Batsheva was a golden woman, full of giving. She warmly adopted foster children and gave them stable ground and a warm home. She was a beloved kindergarten teacher - truly God takes the best," a relative of Nigri told Ynet.

"This is a very big loss; A difficult day of mourning," a family friend said.

IDF forces began searching for suspects around the scene of the incident, which took place at a point between the town of Yatta and the southern industrial area of Hebron, and near the headquarters of the Yehuda Brigade. The hunt is focused on the area of the towns of Bnei Naim, east of the scene of the attack, and Beita, south of the scene. The fear is that the terrorists fled toward Yatta in Hebron.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was visiting the Tel Hashomer recruitment center at the time of the attack, was updated on the details of the attack.

First published: 19:59, 08.21.23

8.21.23 – Mo

Terrorist drive-by more than 20 bullets, killing 1 and seriously wounding another

8.21.23 – Mo

Terrorist fires more than 20 bullets, killing 1 Israeli and seriously wounding another in front of six-year-old child

Investigation into attack on Route 60 in the West Bank shows nearly two dozen bullets fired from terrorists' vehicle at Israeli car at short range, carrying the murdered woman, her unharmed daughter and a man who was seriously wounded; IDF imposes closure on around Hebron but assailants believed to have escaped into the city

Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi, Yoav Zitun, Itamar Eichner|Updated:02:48

A preliminary investigation into the attack that happened Monday on Route 60 in the Mount Hebron area of the West Bank reveals that the shooting took place near a traffic circle - when the Israeli car in which the murdered woman, 40, her 6-year-old daughter who was not injured, and the seriously injured man, 39, were riding slowed down. The terrorist or terrorists in the passing vehicle "took advantage" of the slow down and opened fire on the car - apparently from an automatic weapon that fired a large amount of bullets.

The victim was named as Batsheva Nigri, a 40-year-old mother of 3, from Beit Hagai.

"Batsheva was a golden woman, full of giving. She warmly adopted foster children and gave them stable ground and a warm home. She was a beloved kindergarten teacher - truly God takes the best," a relative of Nigri told Ynet.

"This is a very big loss; A difficult day of mourning," a family friend said.

Aryeh Gottlieb, 39, from Beit Hagai was identified as the man who was seriously injured in the attack. A relative said that "I ask that they pray for Aryeh. Aryeh was a hero in the incident, he continued to drive until someone could help and operate the vehicle while he was shot."

According to the preliminary investigation in the field, the terrorists fired more than 20 bullets at the Israeli car as it slowed down – the reason the gunshots were fatal. The terrorists cut off the Israeli vehicle and shot at it from short range. The IDF estimates that the escaped into the city of Hebron, the largest of the West Bank cities. The IDF is now operating Air Force unmanned drones in the skies above Hebron and other means of observation in the air as part of the pursuit of the terror squad.

IDF forces began searching for suspects around the scene of the incident, which took place at a point between the town of Yatta and the southern industrial area of Hebron, and near the headquarters of the Yehuda Brigade. The hunt is focused on the area of the towns of Bnei Naim, east of the scene of the attack, and Beita, south of the scene. The fear is that the terrorists fled toward Yatta in Hebron.

As part of the manhunt, the IDF placed a closure around Hebron and the surrounding villages. A military source noted: "The IDF forces are currently searching for the terrorists' vehicle and deploying roadblocks in the area, in addition to closure barriers around Hebron and the surrounding villages. In addition, IDF forces were deployed in order to close the circle on the suspects as quickly as possible."

The deputy director of Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva, where the seriously injured man was taken, said: "A 39-year-old wounded man arrived at the trauma unit, fully conscious. He is stable and suffering from extensive limb injuries. He was stabilized and transferred to the operating room. We are optimistic about the continuation of the treatment. He arrived while conscious, he was able to tell his details and was stable."

The wife of the wounded man, who underwent early medical treatment in the field to stop the bleeding, is on her way to the hospital. Military officials stated that the early medical treatment given by the military medics who were on the scene saved the injured man's life.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was visiting the Tel Hashomer recruitment center at the time of the attack, was updated on the details of the attack.

Before the woman was declared dead, MDA emergency medic Moshe Barshat said: "The man and the woman were near the car when they were unconscious and suffering from gunshot wounds. In cooperation with the IDF medical force, we gave them medical treatment that included stopping the bleeding. The man who was seriously injured was taken in a military intensive care vehicle to the Soroka hospital, and the woman was being treated on the spot as she is in critical condition and unconscious."

Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qasem welcomed the attack. "The operation in Hebron is a natural response in dealing with the religious war in holy places. Our people will continue to protect Al-Aqsa and its Islamic and Arab identity, and will not allow the occupation to carry out its plans there."

Islamic Jihad added: "We welcome the heroic shooting operation that targeted the vehicles of criminal settlers south of Hebron. The operation is a natural and legitimate

response to the crimes of the occupation and the aggression of its settlers against our people, and heralds the continuation of the direct response to deterring the enemy in all arenas."

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department condemned the attack. "We again condemn today's terrorist attack by a Palestinian militant that killed one Israeli and wounded one other. We send our deepest condolences to the victims' families. This violence must stop," a post on X read.

There have been quite a few shooting attacks in the southern Mount Hebron area in the past, and the terrorists often manage to shoot at Israelis and escape very quickly - partly to Hebron or Kfar Yatta. Terror cells there have many weapons and there is an active Hamas infrastructure.

The Beit Hagai intersection is located on Route 60 between the Palestinian town of Yatta and Hebron, shortly after the exit from the Beit Hagai settlement. This is an intersection where deadly attacks have occurred in the past, so there is a permanent pillbox there - which is sometimes manned by IDF forces.

First published: 10:41, 08.21.23

8.21.23 – Mo

Iron Dome activated against incoming Gaza threat for second day in a row

8.21.23 – Mo

Iron Dome activated against incoming Gaza threat for second day in a row

Missile defense system triggered less than 24 hours after downing drone over Palestinian enclave; Border area residents report hearing loud blast but no air raid sirens sounded
Matan Tzuri, Yoav Zitun|01:01

The Iron Dome missile defense system was activated Monday morning in the Sdot Negev Regional Council near the Gaza Strip border, firing two interceptors, presumably toward incoming threats from the Palestinian enclave.

A loud blast rocked the area, and residents were informed that no rocket fire was directed at Israeli territory, no air raid sirens were activated and there were no special instructions from the IDF Home Front Command.

Dozens of preschool students were playing outside on Kibbutz Nahal Oz when the explosion was heard. The staff quickly ushered them into a bomb shelter.

"We immediately calmed the children down and explained that there was no siren and there's no need to panic. They're already accustomed to such situations. For now, we've returned to normal," said one of the kibbutz residents.

Sunday morning, Iron Dome shot down an unmanned aerial vehicle in the Eshkol Regional Council near the Gaza border. There were no casualties, no rocket sirens sounded and no damage was caused.

The Air Force's aerial control unit in southern Israel detected the UAV immediately upon its launch and decided to shoot it down and fighter jets were scrambled once it flew eastward toward Israel.

The IDF said in a statement, "The aircraft did not cross into our territory, and from the moment it took off, the Air Force systems tracked its route. Air defense fighters successfully intercepted the unmanned aircraft using the Iron Dome system. The aircraft did not pose a threat to the residents of the Gaza Strip and no alerts were triggered according to policy."

8.20.23 – Su

Orthodox Christian leader furious; no Fire department authorization for Friday feast

8.20.23 – Su

Orthodox Christian leader furious about Israel: 'It is humiliating and a disgrace' After authorities pull plug on major Orthodox Christian event - annual Feast of the Transfiguration celebration, Christian Community Council leader tells Ynet 'they would never stop a Jewish event'

Alexandra Lukash, Nir (Shoko) Cohen | 12:41

Basim Asfur, chairman of the Nazareth Orthodox Christian Community Council, said on Sunday that a Jewish religious event would not have been blocked in the way his community's celebration of the Feast of the Transfiguration was on Friday. "The authorities would have been afraid to stop a Jewish event such as the annual celebrations at Meron at the last moment," he told Ynet.

the Feast of the Transfiguration is an annual event commemorating the occasion upon which Jesus Christ was transfigured. It is one of the most important events on the Orthodox Christian calendar and attracts believers from all over Israel and from abroad. "Christians from all over the world arrive in order to attend," Asfur said. "They come from Russia, Romania, Serbia, Greece, and other countries that belong to Orthodox Christianity. Thousands came on Friday and stood outside the barriers. It was very difficult."

He said church officials had met with Fire and Safety officials and the police, a fortnight before the scheduled celebrations and believed that they would be granted the permit to hold their event and only on Friday, they were informed that there was no authorization. Fire department officials said in response that despite having months to prepare, the church officials did not take necessary steps to prevent a fire hazard, a claim Asfur denies.

"We held a prayer on Saturday, but there were only priests in attendance and no congregants of pilgrims," he said. "It is humiliating and a disgrace that such a prayer is held without Christians at all. We could have been limited to allow only two or three thousand into the church on Mt. Tabor. This cannot be allowed," he said.

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Ynet-News, August 20, 2023 – Sunday

8.20.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Israeli in Sinai jail after altercation with local resident

8.20.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Court releases violent Arab drug dealer with Star of David wound on face

8.20.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday

IDF shot masked settler, throwing rocks at PA vehicles in act of revenge, others ran

8.17.23 – Th- - - News Placed in August 20 spot – Sunday

Russians facility 500 miles east of Moscow to produce self-detonating drones

8.17.23 – Th- - - News Placed in August 17 spot – Thursday

Largest arms deal in Israel's history: US approves sale of Arrow 3 to Germany

8.16.23 – We- - - News – Wednesday

US sanctions Hezbollah group under the guise of environmental activism

8.16.23 – We- - - News Placed in August 19 spot – Saturday

US Gulf of Oman deployment increases after 20 oil tanker seizures by Iran

8.16.23 – We- - - News Placed in August 18 spot – Friday

IDF to relocate five West Bank bases, making way for Jewish settlement expansion