

Ynet-News, August 31, 2023 – Thursday

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8.31.23 – Th
Jordan is behind Abbas firing 12 governors & 35 envoys in PA's sinking popularity

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Jordan is behind recent shakeups Palestinian Authority, experts say
After PA President Mahmoud Abbas fired 12 provincial governors and 35 foreign envoys, analysts say it is Jordan that has pushed him for changes out of concern for the stability of the entity on its border; Further overhauls may lie ahead
Mohammad Al-Kassim, The Media Line|07:39

"The prime minister is continuing with his schedule and it is business as usual," the aide said. "We know that the president wants to make changes. Mr. Shtayyeh has offered his

resignation in the past but it was declined, so until we hear the news officially, we will go on as usual."

Earlier this month, PA President Mahmoud Abbas fired 12 provincial governors in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in what many say is part of an "overhaul" in personnel in the political and security structure. The shakeup continued some days later with the announcement of the retirement of 35 of his foreign envoys, all of them over the age of 65.

Experts believe the dismissals are an attempt to promote newer leadership and quell increasing domestic, regional and international criticism of the PA.

Ramallah-based political analyst Esmat Mansour told The Media Line that Abbas' visit to Jordan contributed to the speed with which he carried out the firings.

"It is not possible for the president to ignore Arab advice, as well as international demands, out of fear for the future and fate of the PA," Mansour said.

Analysts say the Palestinian leadership is scrambling to appease regional players while satisfying the disgruntled Palestinian street, which sees the PA as ineffective, incompetent and a tool in the hands of Israel.

"Abbas is trying through these decisions to give the impression that he is still influential and in control of things, and that change comes by his own will and is not imposed on him by anyone," Mansour said.

As part of the shakeup, Abbas is planning a limited cabinet shuffle in the next few weeks, according to Palestinian media outlets. This may affect the current prime minister.

Ramallah-based political analyst Nihad Abu Ghosh told The Media Line that the PA is facing severe challenges to its political existence, putting its future as a viable political entity into question.

"Abbas recognizes his and the PA's sinking popularity, and we may be in the process of another wave of changes in the PA," Abu Ghosh said.

He said Abbas hopes that the moves will help calm mounting criticism, at least for now. Without the slightest doubt, the Palestinian political system is suffering from a severe crisis because of the failure to hold elections on time and because of the long reign of Palestinian Authority President Abbas in power, despite the end of his term," Abu Ghosh said.

Abbas, now 87, was elected in 2005 for a four-year term that ended in 2009, and has since then remained in power without any elections being held.

"There is uncertainty about the Palestinian political future in the post-Abbas era. This matter leads to a kind of internal conflict between the centers of power over the caliphate. On the other hand, there is a crisis in the political direction of the Palestinian national project," Abu Ghosh said.

The shakeup comes as Abbas' Fatah party, which runs the PA, grapples with mounting political and economic crises. Many analysts say the Palestinian public is resentful of the PA and of Abbas.

"But all this [shakeup] will not solve the crisis, because the essence of the crisis is in the system as a whole and the lack of presidential and legislative elections," Abu Ghosh said. "There is a whole generation that has not been able to exercise their constitutional right to vote."

Ramallah-based political analyst Fares Sarfandi told The Media Line that the expected ministerial reshuffle will not affect the prime minister or most government ministries. "Change will not affect the prime minister, it's not related to the sovereign ministries, but rather some service ministries that have a direct impact on people's lives," he said. "This change is superficial. It will not affect the finance or foreign ministers, for example, who have been in their posts for years."

The latest decisions followed a brief and unannounced visit by Abbas to Jordan, where he met King Abdullah II.

A Jordanian official in Amman who asked to remain anonymous told The Media Line that Jordan's intelligence and political officials were concerned about the stability of the PA and about the rising violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank.

"There are credible reports that Abbas's control and his inner circle have been compromised," the official. "We have witnessed a rise in weapons smuggling this year, and the performance of the security apparatus is questionable."

According to the source, Jordanian intelligence officials concerned by the increase in violence have been pointing their fingers at the PA governors and top PA security and intelligence officials.

Violence in the West Bank has risen sharply in 2023. According to officials in Ramallah, at least 220 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli military, in what the United Nations has described as the deadliest year since the end of the Second Intifada almost 20 years ago. Meanwhile, at least 35 Israelis have been killed by Palestinian attackers during the same period.

The extremist Hamas and Islamic Jihad factions have each claimed responsibility for many of the attacks against Israelis, and both groups have seen their popularity among Palestinians grow rapidly.

"They are both exploiting the security chaos and trying to capitalize on it," the Jordanian official said, adding that Jordan considers the situation a threat to its own national security.

"Perhaps it is competing with Fatah in the West Bank, and this is not new, but Hamas has its own crises in Gaza," Abu Ghosh said.

The Jordanian source said that Jordanian intelligence had expressed concerns about the deteriorating security situation in the West Bank and the growing fear that it may lead to the collapse of the PA.

The official said it was for this reason that Abbas was "summoned" to Jordan for an urgent meeting. The message to Abbas was clear, that immediate action must be taken before things spiral out of control.

"Jordan's fear of chaos is understandable, and this is not new. The West Bank is alongside Jordan. It is afraid of chaos, of producing new refugees, or of exporting the Palestinian crisis to Jordan, and this is what Israel wants as well," Abu Ghosh said.

Changes within the security services are reportedly already underway.

The Media Line has learned that Palestinian intelligence services chief Gen. Majed Faraj has been tasked with recommending replacements for many of the current security leaders.

One of his most important duties is to sift through the top security brass, ensuring that only those with absolute loyalty to Abbas and the officials in charge of their units remain, and not those loyal to previously powerful figures such as Jibril Rajoub, a member of the Central Committee and founder of the Preventive Security Service, or Maj. Gen. Tawfiq al-Tirawi, founder of the General Intelligence Service and former president of the Istiqlal Security University. Both still enjoy widespread support in the security divisions they once directed.

During a recent meeting between Abbas and the heads of the PA security services, he made his dissatisfaction with their performances known and informed them that change was coming.

Observers expect the possible changes also to affect the heads of the security services.. Sarfandi said Jordan has a "real" and "strong" role to play in protecting the Palestinian Authority.

"There is no doubt that there is concern about the internal situation of the [Palestinian] Authority and fear of its collapse and the spread of chaos," he said. "Jordan is the closest and most capable of preserving the situation in the occupied West Bank. Because if things go into chaos, Jordan will pay the price."

The changes also come as a succession battle for the post-Abbas period looms.

"There is a strong struggle over who will succeed the president, and these arrangements may be part of this struggle. This is evident from the marginalization of Jibril Rajoub, for example, and the strengthening of the role of Hussein al-Sheikh [secretary general of the PLO Executive Committee]," Abu Ghosh said..

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8.31.23 – Th

1 killed, 5 injured in ramming at West Bank checkpoint; dozens of alerts every day

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1 killed, 5 injured in ramming at West Bank checkpoint

Another of the injured in the attack on the Maccabim checkpoint is in serious condition; terrorist neutralized

Elisha Ben Kimon 01:24

One man was killed and 5 people injured in a ramming attack at the Maccabim checkpoint. One of the injured, a young man about 20 years old, is in serious condition. The terrorist was "neutralized," according to the IDF. Three of the injured were in a car that collided with the truck used in the attack.

After the ramming, the terrorist continued driving toward Modiin. Soldiers at the Hasmonean checkpoint shot him and neutralized him when he reached the checkpoint.

The 41-year-old terrorist, married and the father of five children, lives in the Palestinian village of Nili in the central West Bank. Israel Police Central District Commander Avi Biton told Ynet Live from the scene of the attack that the terrorist had permit to work in Israel. According to Biton, the terrorist did not go through the Maccabim checkpoint itself, but entered from the Nili checkpoint with a work permit, drove on a road from the settlement of Nili, went to the Shilat intersection, where he turned toward route 443, made a U-turn, and after about 100 meters ran over the young men who were standing on the side the road.

Police spokesman Eli Levy told Ynet Live that "the terrorist was neutralized by the security forces and thus prevented him from continuing to carry out another attack. Which, to our great regret, teaches us about a series of attacks. We have been warning for months about dozens of alerts for attacks every day."

Levy addressed the public, saying that "at this time, we need the public's help with quick calls to Moked 100 - in any case of a suspicious person, a suspicious object, or an incident of illegal activity. Another thing that the commissioner has been saying for many months - every person who has a licensed weapon and is skilled in carrying a weapon, should carry the weapon on his body."

The truck used in the ramming was searched to find out if the terrorist had any weapons. Large forces of the Central Police District were rushed to the scene, and Police Commissioner Yaakov Shabtai came to the scene.

The victims were evacuated to Sheba Tel Hashomer hospital in Ramat Gan, Shaare Zedek hospital in Jerusalem and Shamir-Assaf Harofeh hospital in Be'er Ya'akov.

MDA paramedic Avi Schiff said: "We arrived at the scene with large forces and saw three young men, one of them unconscious and suffering from stomach and head injuries. We immediately gave them life-saving medical treatment in the field and evacuated them in intensive care vehicles to the hospital, with one is in critical condition, one in serious condition and the third in mild condition.

8.30.23 – We-
IDF troops hit with explosive device near Joseph's Tomb in Nablus

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IDF troops hit with explosive device near Joseph's Tomb in Nablus
An IDF force providing security for about 1,500 Jewish pilgrims were targeted by an explosive device on the way to Joseph's Tomb in the West Bank. Islamic Jihad and Hamas claimed responsibility and say they set off several devices. The Palestinians report one wounded by gunfire. The army is investigating
Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi | 16:52

Terror around the clock: An explosive device was detonated late Wednesday night against an IDF force in the West Bank city of Nablus, as it entered the city to provide

security for Jewish pilgrims on their way to Joseph's Tomb. The army is investigating the incident.

The force entered Nablus ahead of the worshippers, in order to secure the area and create a secure corridor for the entrance of the worshippers. At the moment it is not clear if the charge was thrown toward the soldiers, or was activated remotely. The area of the explosion is not the central route where the buses and the worshippers were supposed to pass, but a place far away from it.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad's military wing - The Al-Quds Brigades, and Hamas' Al-Qassem Brigades claimed to have detonated several explosive devices and even opened fire. The Palestinians reported one person was wounded by gunfire.

The IDF takes a serious view of the activation of the explosive device in the Nablus region. The forces at the scene have been reinforced and additional forces from the Samaria Regional Brigade have been sent to the scene, to lead the security of the worshippers

About 1,500 people in 30 buses were expected to enter Joseph's Tomb Wednesday night, despite the attack.

The Samaria Regional Council said that "We have not received any notification about the cancellation of entry to Joseph's Tomb. We are strengthening the security forces that are guarding our country."

The IDF did not immediately comment on the incident.

Dozens of Jews who came across the scene of the attack tried to damage the vehicles of Arabs who were passing by. The police fear reprisals, and many forces were sent to the scene to disperse the gathering.

Earlier on Wednesday there was a car ramming attack in Mount Hebron in the West Bank. A vehicle driven by a Palestinian terrorist sped toward two soldiers of the 603rd Battalion of the 7th Brigade of the Combat Engineering Corps, who were at a military post near the settlement of Beit Hagai near Hebron during a vehicle inspection mission. One of the soldiers fired 10 bullets at the driver of the vehicle, and hit him.

8.30.23 – We-

Palestinian shot accelerating car into soldiers; reminder that terror continues

8.30.23 – We-

IDF troops foil terror attack near Hebron

Palestinian shot as he accelerates his car to drive into soldiers near the site of a fatal attack last week, when a resident of a near-by settlement was murdered.

Elisha Ben Kimon|05:01

A Palestinian was shot by troops on Wednesday in a suspected terror attack near Hebron. He was seen accelerating with his car toward the troops outside the settlement of Beit Hagai, when they opened fire, the military said adding that none of the soldiers were hurt.

A resident of the settlement was killed last week, and another was injured in a terror attack, when terrorists opened fire on their car.

"It's been a few days since the fatal attack that killed Batsheva Nigri and wounded Aryeh Gottlieb and now we were given another painful reminder that terror acts continue and more action and creative thought is necessary to prevent acts of terror," Beit Haigai settlers said in a statement. "We've demanded of the military to block roads leading out of Hebron immediately amid the continued wave of attacks and repeat our demands so that further fatalities and injuries do not occur."

Head of the regional council of Hebron area settlements, Yochai Damri said he expected security officials to prefer the security of settlers over all else. "I wish to praise and strengthen the IDF soldiers for their professional and dedicated actions, he said "unfortunately, the motivation of terrorists to attack us remains unchanged and that is why more measures that will be stronger and will provide more of a deterrence, are needed."

8.30.23 – We-

32 PA schools under orders of demolition averaging 10 students per school

8.30.23 – We-

Dozens of Palestinian schools under threat of demolition

Most schools identified for demolition are located in areas that have their sights set on, often serving herding communities that settlers try to evict; EU asks government for refund after one school demolished

Einav Halabi|00:52

The school year in the Palestinian Authority began earlier this month but there are students who have remained outside the classroom, after demolition orders were issued to several school structures and they are destined to be carried out in the near future, leaving hundreds of pupils without a solution.

Omar Ka'abana an activist in the Bedouin community Ras al Tin near Ramallah, said there is no school for the children and more than 50, now remain at home. "We had an elementary school in a building near our high school, but we were evicted because settlers moved into the area," he said. "The school we had was built in 2020 and the demolition order was issued that same year. a motion against the demolition was rejected by the District Court and now our pupils remain without a school to go to." Ras al Tin is in Area B, an area administered by the Palestinian Authority.

In Area C, there are 32 schools destined for demolition in the near future with demolition orders issued or construction stopped but they are still being litigated. However, most attempts to prevent demolitions have failed thus far.

Some 30 other schools face demolition in the more distant future, most have had demolition orders already issued but they are not expected to be executed soon. This is because they are in areas under municipal planning – half of them in Area B – or in areas that settlers have not set their sights on. Some were built many years ago. Most school buildings under threat, serve the herding communities, that settlers have been working to evict, or at the very least to reduce their areas considerably. There are 16 such schools in the area of Hebron, six in the Jordan Rift, 5 near Jerusalem two in the Bethlehem area, one near Ramallah, one near Jenin and one near Nablus.

The predominance of schools near Hebron, Jerusalem and the Jordan Rift stems from the considerable interest settlers have in those areas. The demolition orders increased over the past year following a Supreme Court ruling that negates ownership rights of 918 residents in a cluster of villages near Hebron, located in an area that the IDF has identified as a training ground and firing range, clearing the way for their eviction. A security official said the schools in question were unsafe, built haphazardly and without proper inspection, and children studying there are at risk of injury. He claimed there are only 10 students in each such school and that they were built with funding from abroad, near existing schools and their construction is therefore perceived as a provocative act.

The latest school demolition that evoked international condemnation was carried out earlier this month, in Kafr Malik, a village of 28 families near Ramallah, where 200 people live. The school was built in Area C and was funded by the EU after the local children had been forced to study elsewhere. After the demolition, a delegation of EU officials visited the village and even asked Israel to refund the money invested in its construction.

8.28.23 – Mo

Secret Libya-Israel meeting leaked by Cohen caused riots & firing of Libya Minister

8.28.23 – Mo

Sacked Libyan minister says meeting with Israeli cleared with PM

In a statement issued after she left for Turkey, Najla Mohammed El Mangoush ministry said she refuses to be a victim of attempts by her PM to avoid embarrassment; Officials in Jerusalem slam 'amateurish' handling of the matter

Daniel Salami|09:53

The office of Libya's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Najla Mohammed El Mangoush, put out a statement on Monday, after the diplomatic storm brought about by her Rome meeting with Israeli counterpart, Eli Cohen. The statement claimed the meeting was

authorized in advance by Libyan Prime Minister, Abdel Hamid Dbeibeh, according to a report by Lebanese TV network Al-Mayadeen.

"Prime Minister Dbeibeh met with Italian Prime Minister Meloni, and agreed that this ministerial [with Cohen] would take place," the statement read. "Dbeibeh asked his foreign minister to claim that the meeting was accidental in order to prevent embarrassment. After she complied, he suspended her," the ministry said adding that the ousted minister has documents to back her position and will not be a victim.

The Lybian ministry also said El Mangoush was adamant in her position that the Palestinian issue must be adequately resolved before any official ties between the nations could even be brought up.

Dbeibeh paid a visit to the Palestinian embassy in Tripoli accompanied by some members of his cabinet. The Palestinian Authority said it welcomed the visit and the Lybian prime minister's message that his government would refuse to normalize diplomatic relations with an occupier and that no other Lybian official would be allowed to meet with representatives of the State of Israel.

Officials in the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem criticized the way in which the Rome meeting, was handled. Making it known publically, led to riots in Libya and to El Mangoush's suspension. The officials called the ministry's conduct "amateurish". "Countries that have no official ties with Israel would be apprehensive about secret meetings in the future after it has been proven that Israel was unable to keep a secret," the official said. "There are unofficial contacts ongoing in hopes of creating bilateral ties with certain nations. When Israeli credibility is compromised, it foils attempts for future official ties with these countries. The minister just shot himself in the foot."

Demonstrations erupting in Libya

Another official, speaking for Cohen said that the meeting in Rome was agreed by both sides. "It was decided in advance the meeting would take place in the Italian Foreign Ministry guest house and Minister Cohen flew to Italy, especially for that purpose. It was a historic meeting that would enable Libya to receive Western recognition and was authorized by the Libyan government. The meeting was supposed to be announced publically but there's strong opposition in Libya. A similar incident happened with Sudan when their Foreign Ministry spokesperson was suspended after a meeting with Israel." News of the meeting between the Lybian and Israeli ministers sparked outrage in Libya with protesters taking to the streets and calling for the ouster of the prime minister. After El Mangoush flew to Istanbul, the Lybian ministry of foreign affairs said the meeting was impromptu, and that in her meeting with Foreign Minister Cohen, El Mangoush was defiant in her stance that the Palestinian issue must be adequately resolved before any official ties between the nations could even be brought up. Members of the opposition slammed the conduct of the Foreign Ministry. "Israel's foreign affairs are a sensitive matter, especially in regards to talks with Arab nations that we have no official ties with, National Unity Party leader Benny Gantz said. "When you're more concerned with PR than you are with thinking ahead, this is what happens. Whether it's

foreign affairs, security, the economy, or education, the Netanyahu government is sloppy and must come to an end."

Former Prime Minister and opposition leader Yair Lapid said the ministry showed it was run by amateurs who were irresponsible and negligent. "Countries around the world have their eyes set on this irresponsible leak and they're asking themselves if Israel is a country you can have official ties with and whether it's trustworthy," Lapid said. "This is a national disgrace designed for nothing more than grabbing headlines."

8.28.23 – Mo

Smotrich vs US: They shouldn't preach to us, there is no more moral army than IDF

8.28.23 – Mo

Smotrich vs US: 'They shouldn't preach to us. We saw what they did in Afghanistan and Iraq'

The finance minister responded to criticism by the US government of Israel, accusing the Biden administration of 'hypocrisy' and saying that 'there is no more moral country than Israel' Smotrich added: 'They shouldn't preach to us about human rights, neither to the IDF nor to us on a political level'

Itamar Eichner|04:54

Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich responded Monday morning in an interview with Army Radio to the criticism of the government by the United States. "There is no more moral country than Israel, and there is no more moral army than the IDF," according to Smotrich.

In the interview, Smotrich was asked about the storm caused by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who said that his right of safe freedom of movement in the West Bank is more important than the right to freedom movement of the Palestinians, and said that everyone who attacks us in the world is a hypocrite."

According to Smotrich: "There is no nation that has been fighting for its survival in the face of murderous terrorism for decades in a cleaner and more careful way than the Jewish people. I am not talking about the Americans and how they acted in Afghanistan and Iraq. 'They shouldn't preach to us about human rights, neither to the IDF nor to us on a political level. This is unmitigated hypocrisy.

In an interview with Channel 12 News on Wednesday, Ben-Gvir said that "my right, and my wife's and my children's rights, to get around on the roads in Judea and Samaria, is more important than the right to movement for Arabs. My right for life comes before their right to movement. This is the reality."

The White House condemned Ben-Gvir's words and a State Department spokesman said that: "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."

8.28.23 – Mo

Hezbollah Muniton smuggling in Jordan Valley; area is now monitored by brigade

8.28.23 – Mo

Muniton smuggling attempts in Jordan Valley were backed by Iran Hezbollah and other Iranian proxies have been increasingly utilizing the vastness of the Jordan Rift Valley to smuggle weapons and munitions into Israel; IDF and Border Police have conducted a joint operation to foil the network
Elisha Ben Kimon|03:16

Ynet exposed a month ago, an unusual smuggling attempt that was foiled by Israeli security forces in the Jordan Rift Valley, in which explosive charges were transported through Jordan via Iranian proxies, hoping to conduct bombing attacks against Israeli civilians - seen as another attempt by Iran to further unravel Israel's security stability in the West Bank.

The expose detailed how Shin Bet and the Israel Defense Forces' central command were conducting a thorough investigation about muniton smuggling networks on the northern edge of the rift in the Jordan Valley, which determined that the smugglers were backed by Iran. At the time of the investigation, its findings were not allowed to be published.

Border Police and IDF's Jordan Valley brigade took part in disrupting the network close to Ashdot Ya'akov, a kibbutz located south of the Sea of Galilee. The various ravines and pathways inside the Jordan valley have become a smuggling hotspot in recent years, used by criminal and terror organizations who believed this area was relatively unmonitored.

Since the beginning of the investigations, over 1,000 weapons have been confiscated by Israeli security forces.

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Ynet-News, August 27, 2023 – Sunday

8.27.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday

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

8.27.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday

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

8.27.23 – Su- - - News Placed in August 28 spot – Monday

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

8.27.23 – Su- - - News Placed in August 27 spot – Sunday
Gallant & IDF target PA leader hiding in Beirut promising to continue terror

8.25.23 – Fr- - - News Placed in August 26 spot – Saturday
Netanyahu backs minister claiming Jewish rights trump those of Palestinians

8.25.23 – Fr- - - News Placed in August 25 spot – Friday TV News
Trump & 8 Lawyers arrested by Georgia for opposing election count in Atlanta

8.24.23 – Th- - - News – Thursday
Netanyahu brief on military: about 100 reservists protest serving a dictatorship

8.24.23 – Th- - - News Placed in August 24 spot – Thursday
Smotrich plan to bolster settlements; US urges to refrain promotion of outposts

8.22.23 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday
After 2 deadly attacks in 2 days, security cabinet meets to change this equation

8.22.23 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday
Settlers hurl rocks, spray tear gas, at troops after terror attack

8.21.23 – Mo- - - News Placed in August 22 spot – Tuesday
Israel strikes targets on Damascus outskirts, where Iranian arms convoy arrived

8.21.23 – Mo- - - News – Monday
Mother of fallen IDF soldier, humiliated at protest supporting judicial overhaul

8.21.23 – Mo- - - News – Monday
Netanyahu: We're in midst of terror wave directed by Iran; Security meets Wednesday

8.21.23 – Mo- - - News – Monday
Terrorist drive-by more than 20 bullets, killing 1 and seriously wounding another

8.21.23 – Mo- - - News – Monday
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