



As Netanyahu visits Trump, official says ‘list of Iran options’ were discussed

Ben Samuels

WASHINGTON – A senior Israeli official said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Donald Trump shared a “genuine consultation” on the list of options at their disposal concerning Iran, rejecting any claims that the meeting was anything but positive and substantive. “Trump has three options: reach an agreement, not reach an agreement or

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intensify the strikes,” the senior official said, speaking on background. “We discussed each option honestly and extensively,” emphasizing that the conversation did not revolve around proposals personally advanced by Netanyahu.

“The relevant question is balancing the sensitivity of the global economy against the ability to maintain economic pressure on Iran,” the senior official said, noting Iran’s greatest concerns at the moment relate to economic hardship and subsequent political unrest. “We discussed additional economic pressure”

through both military and non-military action.

According to the official, Iran’s economy was severely damaged as a result of the war, and suffered a loss of “at least \$300 billion.”

The official claimed that demonstrations in Iran are “beginning, and the regime fears them greatly,” adding, “Inflation is at 90 percent. It could easily rise to 200 percent.”

Netanyahu did not announce Israel’s preferred outcome, the official said, adding that ultimately the final decision rests with Trump unless Iran attacks first, in which case Israel will “respond forcefully.”

“They’re asking themselves why they should do so now, because they know we’d launch a massive response,” the official said, adding, “So far they haven’t attacked us, and that says something.”

In addition, the senior official referred to reports that Israel was trying to promote the fall of the Iranian regime, saying that “there were options that were raised,” without elaborating on them.

Amid the debate to reduce military aid to Israel, the official said that Israel maintains it must become an “independent armaments economy, and not be

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A mourner with a sign of slain supreme leader Ali Khamenei at a funeral for Popular Mobilization Forces members in Baghdad, on Wednesday. *Murtadha Ridha/AFP*

In first, IDF seizes PA-controlled land to connect two settlements

Matan Golan

The IDF will seize land controlled by the Palestinian Authority to connect two new settlements in the northern West Bank – the first instance where PA-controlled land has been seized not for security purposes, according to Israeli NGO Kerem Navot.

IDF Central Command chief Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth signed 15 seizure orders to take control from the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian Authority currently controls 18 percent of the West Bank, known as Area A. It includes all large Palestinian cities and is under full control of the PA according to the 1993 Oslo Accords partition. Entry of Israeli civilians into the area is prohibited by law.

A seizure order allows the military to take possession of real estate or property. International law permits an occupying power to use such orders only for a clearly defined security purpose and temporarily.

However, according to the research organization Kerem Navot, this is the first time the IDF has used such orders in Area A to connect settlements, in a move intended to serve a civilian purpose.

The takeover of the area is taking place against the backdrop of a decision by the Security Cabinet to establish 18 new settlements in the northern West Bank, as part of dozens of settlements that have been authorized by the current government.

This follows the repeal of the Disengagement Law in early 2023, under which some of the settlements are to be established in areas where there has never previously been an Israeli civilian presence.

Shin Bet head alters stance, lets Kahanist party run in election

Chen Maanit

A far-right Kahanist party will be allowed to run in October’s election after Shin Bet chief David Zini reversed the security agency’s position on its eligibility.

In its original assessment, the Shin Bet said the party, whose name translates to “A Whole and

Strong Jewish Israel,” is effectively run by far-right activists and Kahanist Baruch Marzel and Michael Ben Ari, who was the former chairman of the far-right Otzma Yehudit party.

According to an agency assessment, intelligence indicated that Marzel and

Ben Ari sought to use the party to advance the ideology of Rabbi Meir Kahane’s ultra-nationalist Kach movement, which Israel designated a terrorist organization. It also alleged that the two deliberately omitted themselves from the party’s list of founders to conceal

their involvement.

The Shin Bet’s professional staff, including the heads of the department dealing with Jewish terrorism and the research division, had concluded that the party should be disqualified because it was racist and likely to engage in illegal

activity. Under Israeli law, a decision to disqualify a party must be reviewed by the Supreme Court.

In the new opinion, Zini and his deputy wrote that “the results of the renewed review require the Shin Bet to present less definitive conclusions than before.”

The opinion added that “there are gaps in the intelligence analysis we previously submitted, and the intelligence currently in our possession does not meet the unequivocal standard set by the Supreme Court for disqualifying a party.”

Haaretz reported ear-

lier this month that, before submitting the new opinion, Zini informed Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara that he wanted to reassess the agency’s position, which had been formulated before he took office.

The party had previously been disqualified based on classified intelligence the

Pleasing the settler base is all that interests Defense Minister Katz **Editorial** [Page 5](#)

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Liberal democracy, labor rights dropped from matriculation tests



A student taking a matriculation exam in Jerusalem. *Emil Salman*

Lior Dattel, TheMarker

Major civics topics will be cut from high school matriculation exams in 2027, which will mark the eighth year in a row in which students are not tested on chapters related to liberal democracy, the Education Ministry announced.

The chapters were originally cut in 2020 after the outbreak of COVID-19, and the directive stayed in effect following October 7, 2023.

However, the directive was overshadowed by the

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Watchdog pick to represent Likud in dispute over his own election

Chen Maanit

The Likud candidate for state comptroller, attorney Michael Rabello, is representing the party in an appeal it filed against MK Sharren Haskel regarding the voting process for the position.

Rabello, whose election to the post was canceled by the High Court of Justice after Likud lawmakers violated the secret ballot rule, is representing the party position, which rejects the affidavit that Haskel submitted to the court, stating that she was ordered to take a picture of her ballot.

In the response it filed on Wednesday to the High

Court, the party asked to reject out of hand Haskel’s affidavit. It denied her assertion that she was ordered to photograph her vote. The response stated that the

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lawmaker didn’t allege interference in her vote last month, when Likud MKs declared that they took the photographs of their own initiative. The response is signed by attorneys Ofek Bruck and Roi Schechter of

Rabello’s firm. It starts out stating that Rabello is one of the party’s representatives. It also stated that Haskel “didn’t bother to submit an affidavit on the matter” when the High Court was hearing petitions to cancel the election, even though “the matter was directly relevant at the time.” It added, “She doesn’t detail who she claims presented the loaded demand to her.”

The response was filed in response to Haskel’s petition against Likud claiming the party is delaying the merger with the United Right party to prevent her from splitting off and forming her own

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‘We need to finish the job’:

The town where Itamar Ben-Gvir ranks second only to the messiah

Judy Maltz

The Chabad Lubavitch outreach movement insists it is apolitical, and there is some truth to that. Unlike other Hassidic and ultra-Orthodox sects, it is not represented by any political party in the Knesset.

With the exception of the Israeli election in 1988 – and arguably the 1996 election, when the “Netanyahu is good for the Jews” campaign, financed by a donor affiliated with Chabad, played a key role in delivering the Likud leader’s first electoral victory – it never explicitly endorsed a party or candidate.

Yet, an analysis of the vote in its main Israeli stronghold reveals a striking trend: Kfar Chabad has become in recent years among the largest bastions of support in the country for Otzma Yehudit (“Jewish Power”) – the Kahanist party headed by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

In the November 2022 election, Religious Zionism – the settler-aligned party led by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, which ran together on one list with Otzma Yehudit – won 56 percent of the vote in this central Israeli town of 6,500 residents. But conversations with voters here reveal that it was Ben-Gvir – not the party leader Smotrich – who deserves

credit for pulling them in. The Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox party (known, in its latest iteration, as United Torah Judaism), which was once the dominant political force in Kfar Chabad, hardly captured 20 percent of the vote.

A similar trend was evident in the previous March 2021 election; when Otzma Yehudit ran on its own in September 2019, it won 22 percent of the votes here – twice as much as the sectoral party of the religious Zionist community (running under another name back then). As things stand now, Otzma

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Yehudit will run alone yet again on October 27.

Chabad does not define itself as Zionist. Like most ultra-Orthodox movements, it subscribes to the view that any Jewish state that comes into being must be a theocracy, and that this can only happen after the messiah comes. But Chabad embraces a very strong and radical position on concessions involving the so-called Greater Land of Israel (ter-



Netanyahu with a poster of the rebbe in 1999. *Eyal Warshavsky/AP*

ritories captured by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War): Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the last Lubavitcher rebbe, ruled that it is against Jewish law to give up even “one inch” of the land. He went so far as to oppose Israel’s decision to return the Sinai Desert in the early 1980s in exchange for peace.

“The rebbe never interfered in politics,” notes Rabbi Moshe Horowitz, the spiritual gabbai (operating

manager and prayer service coordinator) of Beit Menachem, the largest synagogue in Kfar Chabad.

“What he said is that when we vote, we should vote for the party most committed to the wholeness of the Jewish people, the wholeness of the Torah and the wholeness of the Land of Israel.”

It is a refrain heard repeatedly in conversations

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