

# לשם שמיים

Community Discourse on International Relations

*Every dispute that is for the sake of heaven will be constructive.*

Pirkei Avot 5:20

## IN THIS ISSUE

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# PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

*LeShem Shamayim* is a periodic opinion journal featuring the writing of Barrack students, alumni, and faculty. Our goal is to provide interested individuals with a forum in which to express their diverse views, while fostering greater understanding in the community of the critical issues that face us as Americans, as Jews, and as supporters of Israel.

Spring 2024

Retrospective 2025

בית ספר ברק

JACK M. BARRACK HEBREW ACADEMY





Counter protesters Caren Ayden, and her son, Ayeen Aden, disrupt a pro-Palestinian encampment on April 28, 2024 at George Washington University.

AP Photo/Cliff Owen

# Peace in the Middle East

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*Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel used to say: on three things the world stands: On justice, on truth and on peace, as it is said: “truth, justice, and peace you will adjudicate in your gates.”<sup>1</sup>*

*רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר, על שלשה דברים העולם עומד,  
על הדין ועל האמת ועל השלום, שנאמר אמת ומשפט שלום  
שפטו בשעריכם.<sup>א</sup>*

*PIRKEI AVOT 1:18*

<sup>1</sup>ZECARIAH 8:16

*The editors of לשם השמיים would like to honor:*

- Mrs. Lilach Taichman for her tireless work to bring this publication to fruition over her tenure as faculty advisor;*
- Mrs. Zhannah Riloff for her willingness to continue the legacy;*
- Mrs. Rachel Scheinmann for her support of this project as History Department Chair.*

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**Editors' Note:** *This year's Leshem Shamayim issue presents articles written in the Spring of 2024 with current RETROSPECTIVES (labeled as such) meant to align articles with recent pertinent developments.*

# The Longed-for, Yet Unattainable, Nuclear Weapon-Free Middle East

Jillian Shweky, '26



Nuclear weapons have been a threat to humanity since they were first used in 1945. From the Cold War to current-day disputes, nuclear weapons have been a threat within war, yet rarely ever detonated. Currently, in the Middle East, the danger of nuclear weaponry and war has become more prominent and realistic as rivalries have intensified. Despite preventative actions having been taken in the past, it will be nearly impossible to have a Nuclear Free Zone in the Middle East due to the ambiguity policy of Israel, the rivalry between nations such as Israel and Iran, and the fact that the unpredictable nations of Iran and Russia are collaborating with each other for nuclear weapons.

Though there have been actions taken in the past to prevent nuclear warfare in the Middle East, none of them have been a permanent solution to the problem. The Committee for the Denuclearization of the Middle East was founded in 1962 by a group of Israeli scholars in order to initiate a nuclear weapons-free Middle East. Though countries like Egypt and Iran supported the idea, not every country in that region agreed and little action was taken with this organization. Then, in 1990 the Eighteen Nations Committee on Disarmament created the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). This treaty asked nations to “take practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress towards, inter alia, the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems, and to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of this objective.” Despite this treaty urging only minimal progress for these Middle Eastern nations, once again, not everyone joined and little improvement was made. Currently, six out of the twenty-two Arab nations are a part of the league: Libya, Algeria, Sudan, Palestine, Djibouti, and Comoros.<sup>1</sup> While their participation is significant, it is still only a minority of the Arab nations, and together they do not have enough pull to make the entire Middle East nuclear-weapon-free.

Israel’s strong relationship with the US has given it leeway in the past to go around the NPT rules, leading to tension among the Middle Eastern Nations and Israel, and another reason the Middle East will not be nuclear weapon-free. In 1957, France donated plutonium and uranium to Israel for peaceful reasons. It is estimated that Israel’s nuclear site at Dimona houses 90 nuclear warheads and mate-

rial for 200 additional warheads, but no one knows for sure.<sup>2</sup> This uncertainty is a result of the policy between Israel and the US called *Amimut*, or ambiguity, which decrees that no one is allowed to definitively discuss nuclear activity in Israel. This policy was agreed upon in 1969 when Golda Meir and President Nixon had a meeting where they agreed that if Israel does not test out or discuss their nuclear weapons, the US would not make them join the NPT, and would put off inspecting their nuclear research center. Israel claims that the reason they have this ambiguity rule is to prevent attacks from their enemies but also to stop these countries from attempting to compete with Israel with respect to nuclear weapons.<sup>3</sup> Israel stated that they would join the NPT if they knew there would be peace within the surrounding countries, but that is a nearly impossible task.<sup>4</sup> Also, Shimon Peres, the former prime minister of Israel, said that Israel will not be the country to “introduce nuclear weapons,” and that these weapons are only meant to be “a deterrent.”<sup>5</sup> A major reason Middle Eastern countries want nuclear weapons is because of fear of Israel having power over them by use of their nuclear weapons. Countries like Egypt, Libya, and Syria have been

trying to compete with Israel since the 1960s, and now even Iran talks about the threat of Israel’s nuclear power.<sup>6</sup> Though Israel’s relationship with the US is an invaluable one, this special treatment they are receiving with respect to nuclear weapons is causing upheaval among Arab nations which could prove to be harmful to Israel.

Israel’s ambiguity policy has led to tension within governments and across the globe, providing more of a

motivator for countries to maintain their nuclear weapons in response to Israel. The ambiguity rule also applies to the US government, as officials are forbidden to use any definitive words about Israel’s nuclear weapons. A former State Department official said that words like “assume” or “it’s reported” about Israel’s nuclear weapons are permitted. According to a former US Intelligence official, Israel’s weapons are so disregarded that they are not even mentioned in classified documents. For example, in 2008, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee publicized “Chain Reaction: Avoiding a Nuclear Arms Race in the Middle East,” yet Israel was merely mentioned in the footnotes. Furthermore, in 1986, Mordechai Vanunu, a technician who worked at Israel’s nuclear research center in Dimona was sentenced to 18 years in prison by Israel for taking photos inside of the nuclear site which he released to the British press. As punishment for breaching classified information, he was kidnapped by the Mossad in Italy and sent to prison. Obama’s advisor Gary Seymour said, “For the Israelis to acknowledge and declare it (that they have nuclear weapons), that would be seen as provocative. It could spur some of the Arab states and Iran to produce weapons. So we like calculated ambiguity.”<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, this policy’s ideas were in the right place, but the response from people around the world, and dangerous coun-

**The Israel-Gaza war led Israel to engage in direct conflict with Iran for the first time, which opens the surrounding nations to a risk in security and pulls the Middle East further away from being nuclear-weapon-free.**

tries like Iran who claim that Israel's possession of nuclear weapons is a danger to their "regional stability," show that ambiguity may be beneficial to Israel's safety, but is actually hurting the cause for a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East.<sup>8</sup>

Aside from Israel being seen as a potential threat with nuclear weapons, Iran, an infamous danger in the Middle East, is another contributor in stopping countries from letting go of their nuclear weapons. In 2015, the Iran Nuclear Agreement was devised under the Obama administration. The agreement stated that Iran would receive significant sanction relief if they stopped developing nuclear weapons, while permitting more inspections of their nuclear sites. This deal had many positives, including maintaining control over Iran's unpredictable behavior and an avoidance of any competition with Iran and the surrounding countries. On the other hand, this deal is only set to last 10 years and is a "sunset agreement," meaning it will come to an end. Therefore, it is only delaying the Iranian development of nuclear weapons. However, though the deal has not reached its end, over the past few years it has been abruptly shaken. In 2018, President Trump pulled out of the deal; after that, inspections started tracing uranium that was being enriched to higher levels than in the deal. Then, in 2020 after the US assassinated Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, Iran stopped following the limitations set upon them for enriching uranium. In 2023, it was found that the enriched uranium had reached the level to become a weapon, and though Biden wants to rejoin the deal, nothing has been official.<sup>9</sup> Without guaranteed limitations of Iran's use of nuclear weapons, the entire Middle East and most of the world are on edge.

Though Russia may be beyond the borders of the Middle East, its alliance with Iran creates a threat for the rest of the world, especially the Middle East, due to them both being open to use in nuclear weapons. A U.S. National Security Council official, John Kirby, said in February 2024 that "In return for Iran's support, Russia has been offering Tehran unprecedented defense cooperation. So, in total, Iran is seeking billions of dollars' worth of military equipment from Russia."<sup>10</sup> Currently, in Russia's own war against Ukraine, they have used drones from Iran. Additionally, Russia has aided Iran in meetings of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Russia could potentially help Iran make progress technologically with nuclear energy, as Russia doesn't seem to see Iran and nuclear weapons as cautiously as the rest of the world does.<sup>11</sup> Putin's openness to nuclear warfare is evident as in March of this year, he claims Russia would utilize nuclear weapons if "the very existence of the state is put under threat."<sup>12</sup> Both of these erratic countries' willingness to use nuclear weapons will hold back the entirety of the Middle East from letting go of their own weapons.

Nuclear Warfare used to be merely a threat, but unfortunately, as the world has evolved, it has become terrifyingly possible. As desirable as it is to have a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, with the never-ending polarization there, there is little hope to achieve this. As the author Amit Ray says, "Earth is the playground of our children and their children. We cannot allow it to be

the playground of the nuclear arms of the evil forces."<sup>13</sup>

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## ***Retrospective 2025: A Middle East Beyond Disarmament***

Jillian Shweky, '26

Now more than ever, as 2024 comes to a close, the risk of nuclear warfare becomes a reality in the Middle East due to the conflict stemming from the Israel-Gaza war which has spread from the bounds of Israel and has reached Iran. It is even more far-fetched now to dream of a nuclear-free Middle East because of the war that has led Israel to a direct conflict with Iran whose goals with nuclear activity are unknown and most likely not peaceful, and once again because of Israel's nuclear ambiguity policy that the other Arab nations view as a threat.

It is impossible to have a nuclear-free Middle East when in recent days, Iran is dangerously close to having a true nuclear weapon. Former Israeli Ambassador to the United States Michael Oren said in late December of 2024

Iran might be harboring nuclear weapons created in “weeks, maybe days.”<sup>1</sup> Oren claims Iran fears what former President Trump might do when he is inaugurated, so Iran must get their weapons developed before January 20th. This uncertainty leaves many unsettled countries hesitant to dismantle their own nuclear weapons. Though Iran claims that their nuclear development is for peaceful purposes, and not for weapons, they have enough uranium to make three “low yield nuclear bombs,” according to Newsweek.

Iran used to assert its power through backing terrorist organizations like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, however, Israel has directly weakened these groups since the Israel-Hamas War began, leaving Iran to find a new way to show its power. Israeli officials claim that because the Iranian regime dwindled in the past year, a strong nuclear weapon could allow them to regain their stability and strength. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Tehran “lost different lines of defense,” and that “the costs and consequences to them for pursuing that route I think would be severe.”<sup>2</sup> Iran’s jump at building nuclear weapons causes instability in the surrounding nations and destroys the desire to get rid of nuclear weapons.<sup>3</sup> For the Middle East to be nuclear-free, everyone in the region must be in agreement, but these Middle Eastern countries now fear that their unpredictable neighbor is out-pacing them which could lead to a race to develop nuclear weapons.

The Israel-Gaza war led Israel to engage in direct conflict with Iran for the first time, which opens the surrounding nations to a risk in security and pulls the Middle East further away from being nuclear-weapon-free. Iran’s attack in early October 2024 led Israel to retaliate and target an Iranian air defense and missile production facility which is a direct conflict between the two nations.<sup>4</sup> Israel is known to have an ambiguity policy when it comes to their nuclear weapons, however, there have been more references to the weapons since October 7th.<sup>5</sup> A right-wing member of Israel’s parliament, Tally Gotliv, said on X “Only an explosion that shakes the Middle East will restore this country’s dignity, strength, and security! It’s time to kiss doomsday.”<sup>6</sup> Though she does not represent the entirety of where the government stands, when a member of the government says such a threat, even if it is not true, readers can see it as a reality and it can lead to other countries feeling a more pressing need to develop nuclear weapons. The UN Nations Secretary-General António Guterres feels a Middle Eastern nuclear-free zone is “becoming more urgent by the day” with “regional conflicts raging and tensions reaching a boiling point.”<sup>7</sup> Due to this worry, the International Atomic Energy Agency has called on all countries to join and follow the Nuclear Non-Proliferation League whose goal is to stop the development and spread of nuclear weapons. Israel is a target of criticism as it is the only nation in the Middle East region that is not a part of the NPT, and the representative League of Arab States wants to pressure Israel to join as they feel Israel is preventing them from a nuclear weapon free zone.<sup>8</sup> While it may seem logical that Israel joins the treaty, it is unlikely as they are surrounded by enemies, and need a way to maintain

security for their nation.

Nuclear war has been viewed as a nightmare since nuclear weapons were created, however, now people are waking up from this dream and are being hit with the dismay of it now being a potential reality.

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## The Irony of Those in Support of Palestine

Flynn S. Goldstein '27



Former Harvard professor, Ruth Wisse, a scholar in Yiddish Literature and Comparative Literature opened her treatise, *Jews and Power*, harkening back to the 1975 United Nations Resolution 3379, which unequivocally declared Zionism as a form of racism. She rightfully warned, “Arab belligerents... charged Israel with their own crimes.”<sup>1</sup> Her

statement ominously rings true in the current day amid unwavering anti-Zionism, particularly the variety seen on American college campuses. Ignorant demonstrators accuse the State of Israel of the very violations of human dignity of which Hamas is guilty. Said quite crudely, most students on the offensive are among those despised by the Hamas authorities on account of their identity, even though they firmly support Palestine.

Chief among the agitators’ concerns is that of free speech in Gaza, specifically journalism. While they are justified to protest a complete lack of free speech, they mislay the blame upon the State of Israel. At a basic level, such irresponsibility stems from the fact that these protestors neglect to consider that “Authorities in the...Gaza Strip continue to unduly restrict freedom of expression, association and assembly.”<sup>2</sup> Dating back to 2018, Human Rights Watch has underscored prevalent incidents of “arrests, interrogations, and in some cases beatings and torture of journalists in Gaza.”<sup>3</sup> Such correspondents have no choice but to either self-censor,<sup>4</sup> under the looming threat of death, or perpetuate Hamas’ saga and ideals, disseminating adulterated and censored “facts,”<sup>5</sup> instead of accurate accounts.

Hamas threatens the basic human freedom to protest, perhaps more critically than that of generic free speech. Student demonstrations, starkly resembling those currently seen on US campuses, were shut down by Hamas-controlled police. The irony is undeniable; American students are protesting against so-called Israeli repression, whereas Hamas has been behind the true faces of antagonism against their counterparts in Gaza. Armed militants roaming the street ostensibly frighten their beholders, inspiring fear and nullifying any contemplation against denouncing the government. Furthermore, according to Freedom House, “the authorities monitor social media for critical content,”<sup>6</sup> destroying the possibility of calling for foreign aid and therefore “quieting any political dissidence.”<sup>7</sup>

Whereas the Israeli government stands as a beacon of free speech, it is not bereft of violations of the ideal. The 1967 Military Order 101 applicable to the West Bank re-

quires mandatory permits for political demonstrations over ten people.<sup>8</sup> Quite frankly, such permits are unlikely to be granted. To ensure compliance, Israeli police are liable to employ force to quell unlawful protests if necessary. However, Israel’s media is free to rebuke the government. Nevertheless, media reports are subject to a military censor in order to protect Israel’s security, particularly in the wake of October 7th and the ensuing war against Hamas. Items such as: “military weapons systems and operational details, and the movements of senior officials”<sup>9</sup> are logically restricted to prevent intelligence from ending up in the hands of the enemy. However, no death threats are issued against correspondents for unflattering reports. Such is the true nature of aggression in Gaza, predating the current state of war. The repression of free speech Gazans face comes not at the hands of the Israelis, but the Hamas leadership.

Civilians under Hamas’ jurisdiction are denied basic human rights. Hamas respects not its citizens, nor its treatment of them. Recent reports have revealed that an aid convoy from Jordan was “‘intercepted and diverted’ by Hamas,”<sup>10</sup> according to US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller, to be used by Hamas to support their own war effort, instead of benefitting their civilians in desperate need of basic necessities, namely sustenance, of all things. Furthermore, Hamas’ abrupt October 7th massacre in southern

Israel indiscriminately targeted civilians with the intention to kill or take hostages as many Israeli citizens as possible, constituting a total disregard for the human rights of the citizenry in a neighboring country.<sup>11</sup> Hamas not only dismisses the human rights of their own citizens, they also pay no attention to the rights of foreign citizens. Israel, on the other hand, is known to circulate

leaflets prior to bombings in Gaza, warning citizens of the forthcoming destruction and encouraging them to flee to safety.<sup>12</sup>

While certain aid shipments have been delayed from entering Gaza, the fault does not lie with the Israeli government. It lies on independent private actors and interests unassociated with the government and its aims. A recent ABC News report detailed the Israeli government arresting Jewish settlers who attempted to interfere with the shipments.<sup>13</sup> Israel taking charge insinuates a governmental aim to provide aid to Gazan citizens, against college-age disruptors’ claims to the opposite.

An additional element of the corruption rampant in Gaza under Hamas’ reign is the complacency with which domestic abuse is treated. Rampant sexual abuse is more than tolerated – reports of it are silenced. Gazan officialdom silenced two sisters in 2022,<sup>14</sup> Wissam and Fatima al-Asi, attempting to initiate criminal prosecution against their abusers.<sup>15</sup> The Gazan system empowers men in positions of power to rape young women and suffer no consequences for their undeniably immoral actions. The United States State

**Said quite crudely, most students on the offensive are among those despised by Hamas authorities on account of their identity, even though they firmly support Palestine.**

Department reports that “Palestinian women were frequently unwilling to report cases of violence or abuse to the PA or Hamas due to fear of retribution or little expectation of assistance.”<sup>16</sup> Gazan women are left with a feeling of hopelessness since all routes seemingly lead to no justice and give up hope before even trying.

The climate in Gaza towards sexual abuse undoubtedly led to the rape incidents during the October 7th massacre. “Everywhere Hamas terrorists struck — the rave [Nova Festival], the military bases along the Gaza border, and the kibbutzim — they brutalized women.”<sup>17</sup> The Hamas freedom fighters, idealistically warring for their independence against so-called “apartheid,” in reality committed heinous crimes against humanity and shattered the dignity of so many young women.

Israel is itself not devoid of responsibility for egregious actions. Sexual abuse inevitably is present in Israel, however, women are considerably more equipped to make their causes known. The Israeli judiciary recognizes a broad spectrum of violence including “computer violence”<sup>18</sup> or even “economic violence,”<sup>19</sup> providing women a broader reach to receive justice for men’s immoral actions. A recent Israeli news article cited: “[W]omen realized that they could no longer be silent...Previously, they wanted above all to preserve their home, but now they want to share their experiences and understand that what is happening to them is not normal.”<sup>20</sup> The contrast is astounding – in Israel, women feel more ready than ever to confront their aggressors. In Gaza, the case could not be further from the current situation in Israel. Women are silenced and threatened should they dare to peep.

The IDF has been accused of sexual crimes during the Israel-Hamas war, namely against children being searched whilst naked and detainees in Israeli centers.<sup>21</sup> However, Israeli scholar on Israeli-Palestinian violence, Revital Madar, citing Tal Nitsán, another Israeli scholar on conflict resolution, does suggest that “sexual violence of combatants against civilians is limited”<sup>22</sup> compared to the scope suggested by alternative articles. This serious allegation must be contemplated by the Israeli government and military and subsequently remediated. By the same token, it must be addressed within the context of war.

The most ironic category this article intends to treat is that of the LGBT community. Hamas authorities have defined homosexuality as illegal and punishable by death in accordance with Islamic *sharia* law. Furthermore, transgender individuals are sought by the government and killed for their identities.<sup>23</sup>

Israel, on the other hand, serves as a sanctuary for those Gazans who espouse similar sexual views. Gazans flock to seek asylum in Israel, particularly in Tel Aviv, known for its annual Pride Parade. The current speaker of the Knesset, Amir Ohana is a homosexual.<sup>24</sup> Clearly, Israel chooses to provide those espousing such sexual views with the space to live their most authentic lives.

Those on the college campus protesting Israel’s atrocities conversely facilitate the continued abuse of Gazans

by empowering Hamas with their criticisms of Israel. In each category evaluated above, Israel stands as an exemplar, compared to Hamas’ dramatic violations of international statutes of human rights and general freedoms. Perpetuating the Hamas narrative erases Hamas’ blame and the international support garnered as a result hampers Israel’s quest to depose a corrupt regime, bent on controlling resources for its own interests rather than that of its civilians.

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## Retrospective 2025: The Irony of Those for Palestine: Autonomy of Al Jazeera

Flynn S. Goldstein, ’27

At the time of composition, December 2024, the brutal war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza still rages on. The Iranian proxy and the Jewish nation continually antagonize each other. The eternal words of Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) starkly reverberate; it is indeed “A time for war.”<sup>21</sup> Beyond the combat of the physical battlefield, the belligerents contemporaneously fight a parallel battle for control of public opinion. Both sides keenly understand that controlling narratives can ostensibly sway popular sentiment in their own country and has the propensity to influence aid abroad in its various forms: monetary and diplomatic. The Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera (staunching aligning itself with Hamas aims), has rhetorically spun Israeli antagonism toward their benefit, obscured their ultimate goals with an outwardly noble, yet dichotomous cause, and denied their employees’ collusions with terror despite evidence thereof, disseminating anti-Israeli narratives straight from Hamas.

The news network Al Jazeera weaponized the Israeli government’s injunction against its coverage to promulgate anti-Semitic rhetoric. In May 2024, an Israeli court ordered the local satellite offices of the Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera<sup>2</sup> to cease operations.<sup>3</sup> The journalists seeing their offices raided and equipment “dismantled”<sup>4</sup> retaliated, decidedly labeling their activities as righteous and portraying their staff as truth-seekers in the face of despotic tyrannical media censorship. Their simplistic narratives disseminated in defense of

themselves identified the government’s actions against the agency as “part of a wider pattern of hostility toward the pan-Arab network.”<sup>5</sup> At a low level, the statement implies a broader Israeli aggression against a so-called “pan-Arab network” in order to assert dominance over the Palestinian people. Exploring the historical Pan-Arabism movement – dedicated to forming a unified polity for all Arab factions<sup>6</sup> – adds a considerable layer of depth, therefore subtly construing a menacing – and perhaps employing an anti-Semitic trope – threat: Israel poses a threat of subjugation to the *entire* Arab world; echoing a claim of the campus vigilantes.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu justified his government’s actions by labeling Al Jazeera as a “Hamas mouthpiece,”<sup>7</sup> allowing Israeli authorities to highlight the newfound security bereft of the terror machinery’s influence upon the Israeli public. In August 2024, the IDF linked Al Jazeera journalist Ismail al-Ghoul to Hamas and asserted his participation in the October 7th massacre as part of the elite Nukbha force.<sup>8</sup> Later in September 2024, Israeli authorities substantiated further legal allegations against the firm by implicating six additional employees as involved with Hamas or the Islamic Jihad.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, in October 2024, Ynet, a popular Israeli news source, reported the existence of a “secure line” directly between “the terror organization [Hamas] and the media [Al Jazeera].”<sup>10</sup> Simply put, Al Jazeera’s proximity and interconnectedness with a terror organization overwhelmingly nullify its news coverage and uproot claims of impartiality<sup>11</sup>, instead branding the network as a proverbial megaphone to terrorists. Ultimately, the Israeli government had no choice but to safeguard its national security and prevent dangerous narratives from being spread within the borders of Israel.

Conversely, despite Israel’s focus on its national security, it risks compromising the ideal of free speech. For many, Al Jazeera is “a household name,”<sup>12</sup> therefore, restricting its coverage in Israel has the potential to deny many in the Middle East live reports from Gaza itself and severely dulls the diversity of opinions in Israel. Gideon Levy of *Haaretz* notes that “Israeli TV shows nothing from Gaza”<sup>13</sup> and describes the void of Gazan coverage that Al Jazeera previously filled. Its discontinuation thereof fuels the further restriction of narratives with only military-censor-approved content being disseminated through Israeli television, notwithstanding unchecked narratives circulating independently on social media.

Naturally, both Israelis and Gazans alike await a “time for peace”<sup>14</sup> commensurate to the rampant war. The adversarial government and regime (regardless of legitimacy) compete for media control, intent on holding authority over rhetoric that can ultimately impact national security and political support. Both Israel and its enemy Hamas dabble in restrictive actions against the media to compel journalism in line with the aforementioned goal: Israel relying on the military censor and Hamas communicating with Al Jazeera. Yet, the genesis of the Israeli measures sets them apart. Israel’s action against Al Jazeera constituted a substantiated pursuit to protect national best interests and the war effort against a

news organization employing terrorists and receiving direct commands from Hamas infrastructure.<sup>15</sup> Israel also follows a precedent set by Egypt in 2013 when it “blocked access” to the organization’s website on account of “terrorism” and “fake news.”<sup>16</sup> In turn, Al Jazeera’s response framed the Jewish nation as an enemy of the *entire* Arab world – anchoring its statement in the Pan-Arabian philosophy – while strongly rejecting Israeli claims in juxtaposition to growing tides in Israeli jurisprudence promoting opposition against dissent.

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## The War *INSIDE* Israel

Rachel Loeb, ’24



Hamas’s attack on Israel on October 7 occurred amid domestic upheaval within Israel. Despite this, Israeli society has largely unified behind their country and its collective defense. However, the public’s resentment of Prime Minister Netanyahu for his corruption and judicial reforms has persisted and grown to include frustration

with his handling of the conflict. While Israel initially mitigated political instability by forming a unity government to address the nation’s urgent needs, this arrangement deteriorated with the continuation of the war. Israel must hold emergency elections to ensure its government has the authority to handle the war, negotiate peace, and govern well, all while reflecting the people’s will.

Netanyahu’s election in November 2022, amid unprecedented instability in Israeli politics, quickly catalyzed legal and democratic issues, which sparked protests nationwide. The coalition, led by the Likud Party, is one of the most right-wing governments in Israeli history. It includes contentious members like Minister of National Security Itamar Ben Gvir, who was charged with inciting racism and supporting a terrorist organization. Netanyahu, indicted in November 2019 for corruption and accepting bribes, was criticized for not stepping aside when charged, as Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Olmert had done in their respective administrations.<sup>1</sup> Soon after Netanyahu regained office in December 2022, Justice Minister Yariv Levin introduced two judicial reforms to weaken the Israeli Supreme Court. One would allow the Knesset to overrule the Supreme Court with a simple majority vote and the other would put more representatives of the government on the committee that chooses judges. Though the government claimed this initiative was for the good of the country, many believed the plans would undermine Israel’s democracy and enable the Knesset to help Netanyahu avoid conviction.<sup>2</sup> Although Netanyahu and his right-wing coalition had just won a majority in the Knesset, polls demonstrated that most Israelis believe that the Supreme Court should continue to be able to strike down laws in violation of the Basic Laws.<sup>3</sup> This culminated in one of the largest protest movements in Israel’s history. Thousands of people filled cities and towns nationwide in daily protests against Netanyahu and his judicial reforms, calling for the plans to be discarded and for Netanyahu to resign. After Netanyahu passed a law repealing some of the Supreme Court’s judicial review powers, thousands of IDF reservists publicly quit, which ultimately impaired Israel’s military capabilities.<sup>4</sup>

After Hamas’s attack on October 7, Israelis united to support their troops, however, they resented the government for its intelligence failures leading to October 7. As details were and continue to be uncovered on the causes of these intelligence failures, Israelis have focused the brunt of

their blame on the government, but more specifically, Netanyahu. He has been repeatedly criticized for focusing on the Supreme Court instead of the nation's security needs. On October 7, Israel's police force was understaffed, and its military was unprepared since most of the troops were stationed in the occupied West Bank to protect the controversial settlements rather than the South.<sup>5</sup> Israeli military and intelligence officials did not heed the warnings received before Hamas terrorists breached the border. Intelligence was collected by low-ranking officers but never passed on to the leaders of Military Intelligence or political leaders. As former IDF Intelligence officer Assaf Heller identified, there is a cultural issue by which minority viewpoints on complex issues are dismissed. Gideon Sa'ar, a former leader in the National Unity government, wrote to Netanyahu several times, warning that Israel's enemies viewed the infighting from the judicial overhaul as a weakness of the IDF. In 2023, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant warned Netanyahu that the IDF was in danger of collapsing and that Israel's enemies knew this. Netanyahu ignored these warnings and fired Gallant on March 24 for making his warnings public. Netanyahu only changed his decision on April 8 when he saw that this would hurt him politically.<sup>6</sup> While Israelis still support their country, there is a consensus that the October 7 attack was a reflection of Netanyahu's political priorities and shortcomings in leadership.

Many Israelis are furious at Netanyahu's government, not just for failing to prevent the attack but for its ongoing neglect of the public's needs. After October 7, many who had been, until then, organizing government protests recentered their effort to organize aid, a responsibility they believed should have been the government's. According to Ami Dror, a protest leader, "Civil society organizations... are supporting anything our government fails to support."<sup>7</sup> Although they changed their mission, Israelis are resentful of Netanyahu's government and believe he failed them. Activists interviewed by AFP all agreed the Netanyahu government has failed. According to activist Oren Shvill, "Everything we are doing should have been done by the government." These groups volunteered at hospitals, helped locate missing people, sent equipment to soldiers, shipped supplies to evacuees, and more. Not only is the public upset about the lack of support from the government, but they are also resentful of Netanyahu for making decisions that they believe do not prioritize rescuing hostages. This feeling was exacerbated when US President Biden met with hostage families soon after the attack, while Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu put off any such meetings until the pressure was too great – over a week later.<sup>8</sup> With growing resentment towards Netanyahu, protests have resumed. Thousands have marched in protest in cities like Tel Aviv, demanding that the government represent their interests and make a deal with Hamas. Hostage Matan Zangauker's mother, Einav, asked Netanyahu to choose between bring-

**As new details continue to be uncovered on the October 7th massacre, Israelis have focused the brunt of their blame on the government, but more specifically, Netanyahu.**

ing the hostages home and keeping intact his government by appeasing National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who rejected any hostage deal that would require a ceasefire.<sup>9</sup> During his eulogy for his brother, Ophir Shai claimed the government "abandoned the state of Israel" and that he expected them "to take responsibility and resign immediately after the war ends."<sup>10</sup> This is not likely, and many are furious with Netanyahu over his lack of accountability. While other government ministers, IDF leaders, the army, and the Shin Bet head have apologized and taken responsibility for the attack, Netanyahu has not. Instead of taking responsibility, Netanyahu deferred all questions about his own role until after the war and deflected blame onto his security chiefs.<sup>11</sup> As the government has neglected the people's needs in the post-war aftermath, public outrage has intensified, emphasizing the necessity of holding Netanyahu and his government accountable.

The war has also exacerbated problems that the public already had with Netanyahu. To keep the ultra-religious parties in his coalition, Netanyahu has supported the religious exemptions from military service that the Orthodox have had since the founding of Israel. This stance has led to increased anger, especially with the country at war and the growing Orthodox population.<sup>12</sup> Also, ministers within the coalition, and Netanyahu himself, have been known to make controversial, and even racist statements. This has already

been a major criticism in the past, however, with the spotlight on Israel during this war, Netanyahu's lack of awareness of how his words are received is worse than ever. For example, while describing Hamas's actions on October 7, Netanyahu used the biblical quote "remember what Amalek did to you."<sup>13</sup> Although he later claimed that this was not a call for murder but only a description of October 7, it was almost inevitable that this would be used as a basis for genocide charges against Israel at the ICJ as it invokes the commandment to wipe Amalek off the face of the earth. Many of Netanyahu's actions which already upset the public, have exacerbated following the crisis, leading to increased discontent among Israelis over his leadership.

As the public's disillusionment with Netanyahu grows, they have increasingly turned to Benny Gantz as their preferred leader. The new unity government was created to project a unified front, and it included the opposition leader Benny Gantz. It would have included opposition leader Yair Lapid had Netanyahu met Lapid's demand to exclude right-wing ministers Smotrich and Ben Gvir. The coalition established a small war cabinet composed of Gantz, Netanyahu, and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Creating this coalition required days of negotiation between Netanyahu and Gantz, and its slow pace led to even more criticism by the public, given the urgency of the security crisis.<sup>14</sup> Now, the new national unity government is failing because of a lack of consensus between Netanyahu and Gantz. In March, Gantz traveled to Washington without Netanyahu's support,

prompting Netanyahu to publicly criticize him, furthering the divide between the two.<sup>15</sup> In November, Ma'ariv polled the public on who they believed was more suitable to be prime minister: 41% chose Benny Gantz, while Netanyahu received 25%, his lowest rating yet. In a later poll, Gantz's support expanded to 50%. In all polls, over 70% of Israelis want Netanyahu to resign, and 25%–30 want him to do so right now, even during the war. Weekly tracking polls since October indicate that approximately 56% of Jewish Israelis believe Netanyahu is injecting his personal political considerations into his management of the war. Moreover, the Agam Institute revealed that the percentage of Jewish Israelis who held Netanyahu solely responsible for the attack on October 7 increased from 17% to 35%.<sup>16</sup> This is even more striking, considering that it goes against the general trend of countries rallying behind leadership during war.

The leadership of a country should represent its people's interests, and at no time is this as important as during wartime. Netanyahu lacks a mandate, as seen by mass protests and polls that show clear support for Gantz. Only through an early election can Israel get leadership supported by a majority. While many argue that an election should not take place during war, waiting for peace is not a good idea. Waiting for elections gives Netanyahu a reason to prolong the war, especially considering many people already believe he is making decisions for political reasons. According to Daniel Levy, a former Israeli negotiator, “[Netanyahu] wants to drag [the war] all out because once the war is over, what is the excuse for not having new elections?”<sup>17</sup> Although Netanyahu claims that it would not be safe to hold an election, many countries have gone through elections and changes in leadership during wartime. Gantz recently called for elections to be set, saying that they “must set a consensual date for September.”<sup>18</sup> Israel just held municipal elections in February with a turnout of 54%, down only slightly from 57% in 2018 and up from 51% in 2013. Interior Minister Moshe Arbel said that the high turnout in the municipal vote proved that there was “no obstacle to holding national elections.”<sup>19</sup>

The events on October 7 and the subsequent war have underscored the deep issues within Israeli leadership. Despite their rallying behind their country, the Israeli public's dissatisfaction with Netanyahu has only intensified as they believe he prioritizes personal interests over national welfare. From charges of corruption and judicial reform to accusations of mismanagement of the war, the majority of Israelis do not support Netanyahu. It is important to have elections *now*, to ensure that government officials are held accountable and that Israel's leadership reflects the will of its people.

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# Retrospective 2025: Struggle for Power: Netanyahu's Enduring Control During Wartime

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The research paper *THE WAR INSIDE ISRAEL* by Rachel Loeb written last year starts with the thesis: Israel must hold emergency elections to ensure its government has the authority to handle the war, negotiate peace, and govern well, all while reflecting the people's will. While this call for an imminent election makes sense, it is not what has happened in this past

year. Donald Trump's election as President of the United States, for a second time, boosts Netanyahu's chance of staying in power until Israel's next election in 2026. Netanyahu's reinforced security in his position could lead to an intensification of the War in Gaza as well as the fighting in Lebanon, although Trump states that he wants this War to end promptly.<sup>1</sup> On September 16 and 17, thousands of pagers exploded in parts of Syria and Lebanon after a year of drone and missile attacks. Netanyahu commented that this attack was carried out "despite the opposition of senior officials," a statement believed to be aimed at Defense Minister Yoav Gallant who was recently fired before his reinstatement after Hamas attacks.<sup>2</sup> Many Israelis believe that Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant was the voice of reason in the Israeli Government and had the power to keep the government in check until he was fired by Netanyahu after disagreements over domestic and political issues. After this dismissal on November 5th, Netanyahu stated that "trust between me and the minister of defense has cracked."<sup>3</sup> Although this release of Gallant was stated to be for the benefit of the country after many disagreements, it paved the way for Netanyahu to make decisions of his own without a defense minister to oppose him. More recently the International Criminal Court or ICC, issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu, Gallant, as well as a Hamas commander, Mohammed Deif, who was said to be killed in July. The ICC claims that these three men were a part of the crimes during the Israel and Hamas War. Many European Countries accepted the ICC's decision with the British Government going as far as saying that Netanyahu would be arrested if he traveled to the UK. Netanyahu compared this warrant to the Dreyfus Affair in France which saw Captain Alfred Dreyfus falsely convicted of treason and rudely awakened world Jewry to rampant anti-semitism. President Biden of the United States called it "outrageous" and stated that America will always stand with Israel. Gallant commentated that placing the actions of Hamas and Israel in this War on the same level "legitimizes the murder of babies, the rape of women, and the abduction of the elderly from their beds."<sup>4</sup> Overall the internal political conflicts of disagreements in the government, and external pressure from the ICC as well as other countries, make it likely that

Netanyahu will stay in office as Israeli Prime Minister at least until the 2026 elections going against many of the Israeli citizens who want to see new leaders soon.

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## Humanitarian Aid in Gaza: Who Exactly Bears Responsibility?

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Although the topic of Israel and Palestine has always been a polarizing discussion, Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, has sparked worldwide outrage, specifically surrounding the lives of innocent civilians caught in the crossfire of the war. Many pro-Palestinian advocates talk about the humanitarian crisis, and news reports show alarming rates of homelessness, among other tragic figures, in the Gaza Strip. Through all of this, the moral question of who should provide aid, and how much, arises with no clear response. Given the history and current situation surrounding humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip, Israel must call on its allies, and the surrounding countries, to provide security and aid until the end of the war.

The Gaza Strip has long relied on foreign support, and funding, to ensure that its citizens had basic necessities, draining resources from other countries. The over two million Palestinians living in the Strip have benefited from financial support from countries worldwide, including a UN council whose entire focus is the Palestinian refugee crisis.<sup>1</sup> In fact, prior to October 7, 80% of Gazan civilians relied on support from foreign countries and agencies. Furthermore, the unemployment rate in 2022 was anywhere between 25-45%, showing the need for such large amounts of aid.<sup>2</sup> However, support has also come in the form of supplies and infrastructure; the Oslo Accords were one of many agreements designed to increase development in the Strip.<sup>3</sup> Israel in particular also supplied Palestinians with a large percentage of Gaza's clean water and electricity supply. Before the war, Israel sent 18 billion liters of water each year and 50% of the Strip's total electricity needs.<sup>4</sup> These international entities have given support out of a sense of moral responsibility, providing for Palestinians when their own governments, including the Palestinian Authority, who could not support their civilians, and Hamas, who refused to help as well. Clearly, giving aid has only enabled terrorist groups, such as Hamas, to provide only for their top officials; this is evidenced by the top 3 Hamas leaders' worth totaling \$11 billion, as estimated by the National Post, and pictures posted of the leaders flying privately and staying at five-star hotels.<sup>5</sup>

While Israel has financially supported the Palestinians since 1948, they have been forced to cut back aid since October 7th due to legitimate concerns about safety and the recipients of the aid. In the past, Israel has always supervised aid going into Gaza, for fear that terrorist groups could take the aid intended for civilians. However, now with the war raging, even if all of the resources were guaranteed to make it to innocent people, Hamas benefits from the financial aid, allowing the government to focus its resources on areas other than infrastructure.<sup>6</sup> Immediately following

the attack in October, Israel enacted a blockade to prevent supplies from entering Gaza. Among other complaints, the Israeli government has cited stolen goods as a direct cause for the continued blockade. Additionally, Israel claims that international relief industries such as the U.N. are responsible for the delivery of aid, and have failed to live up to their promises.<sup>7</sup> Concerned with safety, Israel complains about a lack of security for delivery trucks, saying that all police officers are, in actuality, terrorists. Perhaps most importantly, delivering aid is now dangerous, both for the handlers and the Palestinian civilians. In one incident, over 100 people were killed when civilians desperately tried to access supplies while the truck was in transit.<sup>8</sup> For any country, these concerns would lead the government to be hesitant to send aid, if not pull out altogether. From an Israeli perspective, many have grown callous regarding helping Palestinian civilians. In their minds, facilitating aid deliveries is largely a waste of time and safety threat, with much of the supplies not reaching those in need.

Throughout the war, the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip has grown, triggering an even greater need for deliveries of aid. Recent reports show that more than 75% of Palestinians have been displaced from their homes and have no shelter to go to.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, as of April 19, 2024, approximately 76,500 are wounded in Gaza, with little to no medical supplies or attention given to them.<sup>10</sup> Israeli bans have restricted entry of aid, including surgical tools and disinfectant supplies, that could assist with lessening the health crisis.<sup>11</sup> Most pressing, however, is the food crisis. Experts predict that almost all of the citizens living in the Gaza Strip are skipping at least one meal a day, with many unable to support even one or two meals daily. As of the first week in March, at least 20 people have died due to malnutrition and dehydration.<sup>12</sup> In fact, many researchers believe that Gaza, especially Northern Gaza, is on the verge of famine; they cite the highest hunger levels today of anywhere in the world.<sup>13</sup> It is indisputable that the Palestinian civilians need help, and fast. Supplies entering the Gaza Strip not only need to be maintained, but need to be increased and diversified to help them before it is too late.

Just as in any war, Israel has the duty, and right, to focus its resources first and foremost on its own citizens. In any other case, countries would not be asked to provide aid to their enemies. For example, following World War II, the United States implemented the Marshall Plan providing aid only to European nations that would join in drafting a recovery plan, knowing that the USSR would decline.<sup>14</sup> In this way, they only helped the countries that fought alongside them in the war. Furthermore, the UN considers the protection of civilians to be the responsibility of the government ruling over them.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, Hamas, which rules over the Palestinians in Gaza, and is not taking care of its citizens, should be held accountable. Providing aid to Gaza only continues to incentivize Hamas to starve its people.<sup>16</sup> Even more importantly, Israel must support its displaced and injured people. Since the war, 135,000 civilians in Israel have fallen under the title of "displaced person," partly due to

the countless communities that were destroyed on October 7 by terrorists.<sup>17</sup> This displacement can exacerbate physical health problems, and rebuilding could take years. Schooling, transportation, sustenance, and counseling are all additional necessities for displaced people, along with physical and mental health support for injured and traumatized citizens, which is an additional cost for Israel.<sup>18</sup>

As a result of the circumstances that Israel finds itself in, together with the current and past crises in Gaza, other countries should pitch in to provide the aid needed to sustain the Palestinians. While the humanitarian crisis is dire and must be addressed, it is not Israel's duty to continue giving aid to the Gaza Strip, especially now that Israel is at the forefront of a war against Gaza's government. Luckily, many foreign sources have donated aid through water and air, including through the construction of the newly completed, temporary pier to facilitate aid deliveries. Although Israel has supplied resources in the past, it is not Israel's responsibility to continue to do the job of the Gazan government.

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## Retrospective 2025: How Has the Humanitarian Crisis Changed in Gaza?

Laura Julie '27



As the war between Hamas and Israel has continued, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza has worsened.

The war in Gaza has caused over 2 million Gaza citizens to suffer from homelessness and rely on food assistance to survive.<sup>1</sup> About one year after the war began, over 1.7 million people, or nearly 80 percent of Gaza's population, were at risk of famine due to insufficient access to food.

Water providers in Gaza have been unable to continue providing to their citizens due to a lack of resources. The lack of resources in Gaza has caused these companies to ration or pause supplying water altogether.<sup>2</sup> Clean water in Gaza has been heavily restricted, causing people to rely on unfiltered and contaminated water. Less than four percent of the freshwater in Gaza is clean enough to safely drink, and the sea surrounding Gaza is dirty and polluted.<sup>3</sup> The lack of clean water is contributing to high levels of illness in Gaza as well.

Due to the increasing crisis in Gaza, many countries have increased their efforts in providing aid to Gaza. These international efforts, while important, have not been sufficient in helping the people of Gaza survive and thrive. Without consistent and reliable aid, Gazans will continue to suffer from shortages of food, water, and medical care, worsening by the day.

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## Netanya-Who?: Israel's Post-10/7 Reaction to an Already Polarizing PM

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The tragic events of October 7 marked a pivotal and somber moment for Israel and its surrounding region. On this day, a sudden and unprecedented escalation in violence erupted between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, leaving a lasting impact on both local communities and geopolitical dynamics. The aftermath of this day has reverberated through Israel's social, economic, and

political landscape, prompting worldwide concern and diplomatic efforts for resolution. On the morning of October 7, sirens wailed across multiple Israeli cities as rocket barrages originating from the Gaza Strip penetrated deep into the country's territory. The intensity and coordination of the attacks surpassed those of recent conflicts, raising the stakes and catching many by surprise. Israel's Iron Dome defense system, celebrated for its success in intercepting rockets, faced an overwhelming volume of incoming projectiles, resulting in significant damage and casualties. Simultaneously, reports emerged of border infiltrations involving heavily armed militants entering Israeli territory, leading to direct clashes with Israeli security forces. These incursions resulted in extensive civilian and military casualties, particularly in border communities, shaking the sense of security among residents.

In the wake of the unprecedented violence that unfolded on October 7, Israelis have found themselves grappling not only with grief and anxiety but also with questions of leadership and accountability. The large-scale, coordinated attacks by Hamas from Gaza exposed vulnerabilities in Israel's security infrastructure, casting a critical spotlight on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government. Public sentiment toward the long-serving leader has shifted, revealing a complex blend of support, disappointment, and calls for change. For many Israelis, October 7 was a turning point in their perception of Netanyahu's leadership. The prime minister, known for his hawkish stance on security and his reputation as a protector of Israel's borders, faced mounting criticism over the apparent lapses in intelligence and preparedness that allowed the attacks to unfold. Political analysts and members of the Israeli public alike have expressed frustration, asking how a government so focused on defense could be caught off guard. In the days following the attacks, public demonstrations erupted in various cities, with citizens voicing their dissatisfaction through protests and social media campaigns. Chanting slogans like "Where was the government?" and "Accountability now," these protests highlighted a deep-seated concern that Netanyahu's administration failed to uphold one of its core promises: ensuring the nation's safety. While criticism of Netanyahu has been vocal, a substantial segment of the population still supports the prime minister and his government. Proponents argue that the events of October 7 were unprecedented and that even the most sophisticated intelligence networks are not in-

fallible. They emphasize Netanyahu's extensive experience and track record in navigating complex military and diplomatic challenges, suggesting that his leadership is essential during times of crisis.

Coalition members and loyalists have publicly defended Netanyahu, asserting that the primary focus should be on unity and resilience rather than assigning blame. "The enemy seeks to divide us," one prominent government figure remarked during a public address. "Now is not the time for infighting but for collective strength." Despite pockets of support, an increasing number of Israelis, including former military officials and political figures, have called for an independent investigation into the government's handling of intelligence and security before October 7. Questions have arisen about whether warnings were ignored or resources misallocated and whether Netanyahu's focus on other political priorities, such as judicial reforms and coalition politics, may have contributed to lapses in national security. The Israeli opposition, led by figures such as Yair Lapid and Benny Gantz, has seized on the moment to advocate for a reevaluation of national security policies and leadership strategies. Their public addresses have emphasized the importance of unity while pressing for transparency and accountability. "This is not about politics; it is about the safety and future of our country," Lapid stated in a recent interview. "We must learn from these events to ensure that it never happens again." Gantz, a former military chief, called for a thorough review of Israel's defense posture and urged the government to prioritize rebuilding public trust through swift and decisive action.

The tragic events of October 7 have left an indelible mark on Israeli society, prompting reflection on the nature of the government, leadership, security, and accountability. For Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a leader whose tenure has been defined by his reputation for safeguarding the nation, the aftermath presents a formidable test of his authority over the country. As Israelis come to terms with the trauma of that day and its implications, the nation's collective gaze turns toward the future, hoping for lessons learned and stronger measures to ensure lasting security.

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## Retrospective 2025: Netanyahu's Inner Circle Shakeup and Personal Legal Troubles

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In response to the repercussions that occurred on October 7th, Netanyahu altered Israel's security. Specifically, Netanyahu fired Defense Minister Yoav Gallant because of disagreements on reforms in Israel's defense field, which threatened the country's security. When October 7th occurred, this conflict only

led to an increase in criticism of Netanyahu and his government, adding to the tension between the two and ultimately leading to the dismissal of Gallant. Secondly, the resignation of the military chief of staff, Herzl Halevi, came as he faced backlash of the military's utter surprise on October 7th. Lastly, the leadership of Shin Bet chief Ronan Bar is being questioned on why there was a failure to prevent the attack, even with supposedly intelligence warnings, leading to a public investigation into his conduct. Currently, he is embroiled in a conflict between the Supreme Court and the government concerning the legality of his termination by Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. These changes were primarily made by the exposed cracks in the government and the failure to prevent a significant-scale attack. When making these changes, the hope is that next time Israel can prevent such an attack in the future.

Now, with Netanyahu's trial pending once again, October 7th adds a whole new layer to the complexity and legal troubles. In addition to October 7th, Netanyahu is dealing with three major cases, one of the most high-profile legal disputes in Israel's history. With the continuation of this trial, the corruption charges against him could show a failure in government when it is needed most in the country at the moment, as Netanyahu must simultaneously shoulder his responsibilities as prime minister. At the same time, supporters of Netanyahu see this as politically motivated and an attempt to remove him from power. Yet others consider this a serious issue of corruption that must be dealt with. With complications already arising before the war, October 7th only further complicated the narrative on this case and muddied Netanyahu's already unsteady leadership.

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