

## PM's bureau asked Shin Bet to help him avoid trial testimony on security grounds



Michael Hauser Tov

Officials within the Prime Minister's Office recently asked the Shin Bet security service to provide an opinion allowing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to avoid testifying at his trial on security grounds.

His testimony is supposed to start on December 2. The bureau asked the agency to say that for security reasons, Netanyahu couldn't spend long periods of time in locations

where his presence will be public knowledge well ahead of time.

But the Shin Bet refused to provide such an opinion. Instead, it began an extensive review of the question of whether the testimony can take place as planned while maintaining the necessary security for the prime minister.

In recent days, people close to Netanyahu and his family have been pressing him to fire Shin Bet director Ronen Bar. Senior defense

officials said they think the pressure being exerted for Bar's immediate dismissal stems from his refusal to provide the opinion sought by Netanyahu and his decision to instead seriously investigate the testimony's feasibility.

The Walla internet news site reported that Netanyahu is indeed considering firing Bar, and is also considering whether to treat the fact that flares were thrown at his private home in Caesarea Saturday night

as a security failure that would justify the dismissal.

In recent days, the Shin Bet has conducted numerous checks related to the opinion it has been asked to prepare. Among other things, senior agency officials visited the Jerusalem District Court to find security solutions that would enable the testimony to take place without compromising the prime minister's security.

But if the agency concludes that it's not possible

to ensure the prime minister's safety during his testimony, its report will say so.

The opinion the Shin Bet will submit is important to Netanyahu, who is determined to postpone the start of his testimony. After the court rejected his request to postpone it on the grounds that it would compromise his security, Netanyahu's aides are hoping an official Shin Bet opinion backing this argument would result in the testimony being deferred. "The Shin Bet is a genu-

ine gatekeeper," one senior defense official said. "If necessary, it will increase security even for Yair Netanyahu in Miami, regardless of the cost. On the other hand, it won't just provide a security opinion if it isn't really needed."

January will mark five years to the filing of the indictment in Netanyahu's three cases in which he is charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust.

The Prime Minister's Office declined to comment.

## Ben-Gvir uses gun license affair to call to oust AG

Noa Shpigel, Josh Breiner and Chen Maanit

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir assailed the attorney general on Monday, accusing her of trying to fabricate a case against him over his policy on issuing gun licenses to civilians.

"There's no choice but to remove her from office immediately," he added.

Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara denied his accusation, saying "no such thing ever happened."

Ben-Gvir claimed that a prosecutor working under Baharav-Miara went to the police's Lahav 433 anti-fraud unit in an effort to dig up incriminating material against him on this issue.

## Limiting terms of legal advisers

News, Page 3

"At that meeting, he asked that a criminal investigation be opened against me over handing out guns," Ben-Gvir said of that prosecutor. "The unit examined all his allegations and informed him that there was no basis for the suspicion and no evidence of any suspicions, so they have no grounds for opening an investigation."

He said he obtained this information from a source in the prosecution.

"This source said the prosecutor went back to the attorney general and told her this, and was yelled at for being too weak," he continued. "And then she sent another of her deputies, someone more decisive. And this time, she gave an order - investigate and find me something against Minister Ben-Gvir."

Ben-Gvir claimed that more generally, Baharav-Miara sent the police "requests to open investigations

U.S. announces sanctions against settler group **News Page 2** • U.S. and Iran face nuclear choice **Alon Pinkas Page 4**

## Five also wounded near Tel Aviv

## Hezbollah rocket fire kills 41-year-old woman in Shfaram

Adi Hashmonai, Jack Khoury and Ofer Aderet

A direct rocket hit to a three-story house in the northern town of Shfaram killed a 41-year-old woman and wounded 30 others on Monday night, the Magen David Adom rescue service said, while shrapnel from an intercepted rocket injured several people in Ramat Gan.

The woman was identified as Shfaram resident Safa Awad, a teacher and mother of four children. Other victims included a woman and a 4-year-old child, who both suffered serious wounds. Another 10 suffered minor injuries from shattered glass.

Awad was trapped inside the building. Rescue workers extricated her in critical condition, according to the rescue service.

The IDF said that five rockets were launched at the Shfaram area from Lebanon, and that interception attempts were made. A total of

47 people have been killed by Hezbollah rocket fire since the war began.

Also Monday, the IDF said that the air force intercepted one rocket launched from Lebanon at Tel Aviv. Shrapnel from the intercepted rocket fell on central Israel. Five people were reportedly wounded by the rocket fire, apparently shrapnel: one woman seriously and two moderately. Another two suffered minor injuries. The IDF also said it had intercepted a drone launched from Lebanon at Haifa.

Rockets continued after those incidents, causing sirens to sound in Kiryat Shmona.

An Israeli airstrike late Monday struck a densely populated residential area in Lebanon's capital Beirut close to the UN headquarters, parliament, the prime minister's office and several embassies, killing four and wounding 18, according to reports.



Safa Awad, inset, and the fire caused apparently by shrapnel from a rocket that had been intercepted, in Ramat Gan on Monday evening.

Tomer Appelbaum

See BEN-GVIR, Page 2

## In southern Lebanon, there's no sense of approaching cease-fire

Adi Hashmonai

SOUTHERN LEBANON - At 8 P.M. on Saturday night, a Humvee arrived at one of the communities near the northern border carrying a group of dusty reservists from the Golani Brigade who had just left Lebanon. One of them was Eyal Reichman of Haifa, who was surprised to learn that just a few minutes earlier, rockets had

in Lebanon's western sector - that is, the ones a bit farther north than the first line of villages right along the border.

From around six kilometers north of the border, you can already see the city of Tyre and the area north of it. But while the view is different, most soldiers don't see any change in the type of terrorist infrastructure they are encountering in and

David Karas added. "Here too, we've seen launchers in even greater quantities than in the first line of villages." "There's more fighting here, more encounters with terrorists," he added. "But we thought it would be even harder. Ultimately, the enemy is fleeing, but we run into a cell or two here and there."

Lt. Col. Oren Schindler, commander of the 74th armored battalion that has been teamed up with the Golani Brigade, explains that contrary to what they expected, offensive infrastructure, meant to be used by Radwan Force terrorists, has also been found in second line of villages. "There are some differences between the two lines. Firstly, the weapons [in the second line] are meant for a longer range - they are medium-range. The setups look a little different and over here we encounter a lot of defensive setups, but there are also offensive setups," Schindler says. "In the first line there was Radwan terrorist infrastructure," he says, referring to the elite Hezbollah force. "Over here we expected to encounter more defensive setups," he says, adding that there were both. "We saw that they were working together on the defensive line, too, most likely because they did not plan for such a long war."

The tour of the sector took place in the dark, but the destruction in the village was still visible everywhere

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## 'Just because I was Jewish':

## Free speech scholar concerned about anti-Israel campus protests

Judy Maltz

BERKELEY - Not long after the October 7 attack, a student at the University of California flagship campus shared a photo of Professor Erwin Chemerinsky on Instagram, announcing that the law school dean was taking a sabbatical to join the Israel Defense Forces. It obviously wasn't true.

In April, anti-Israel activists circulated posters on social media and on bulletin boards at the law school featuring a caricature of Chemerinsky holding a bloody knife and fork, with blood dripping from his mouth. It referred to him as "Zionist Chem."

A prominent international authority on free speech, Chemerinsky believes these students were in their First Amendment rights to attack and malign him. He also thinks they are antisemites.

"It had nothing to do with anything I had ever said about Israel or Gaza," he says in an interview in his office. "It was just because I was Jewish. They would not have done those things if I wasn't Jewish. And that is antisemitic."

Berkeley was the birthplace of the 1960s Free Speech Movement, and the campus is a well-known bastion of left-wing politics. Not by coincidence, it has emerged as a key hub of the anti-Israel campus protests



Students protesting at the Harvard graduation ceremony in May.

Charles Krupa/AP

that have swept across the country this past year.

Last spring, for weeks on end, anti-Israel protesters blocked Slather Gate, a campus landmark, to protest the war in Gaza, forcing students and faculty to find alternative ways to get to their classes. In a particularly violent incident in March, anti-Israel protesters stormed a building where an Israeli army veteran was delivering a talk. The demonstrators shattered windows and injured several Jewish students in attendance.

But Chemerinsky says he is even more shocked by what he has witnessed on

campus this year. It isn't that the protest movement has grown (it hasn't), but that the rhetoric has taken a dangerous turn.

"You could say that the rallies last year - except perhaps at the very beginning when I did see some expressions of support for Hamas - could be described as anti-Israel or pro-Palestinian," he says. "This year, we're seeing a public celebration of what Hamas did, and that is extremely upsetting to me."

To mark the one-year anniversary of October 7, anti-Israel students at Berkeley last month held a big rally, with signs prominently on

display declaring "Long Live Al-Aqsa Flood" (the name used by Hamas for its October 7 massacre) and "Israel Deserves 10,000 October 7ths."

Deeply disturbed by what he had seen - evident on other campuses as well this fall - Chemerinsky penned a piece in the New York Times, calling on university administrators to condemn such glorification of terrorism.

A week after the piece was published, Rich Lyons, the new chancellor of UC Berkeley, put out a video message, warning that "normalization

See SCHOLAR, Page 7

Israeli troops operating in Lebanon, last week. IDF Spokesperson

been launched at his home town. "We saw the trails of launches from Tyre, but I didn't really know where they were headed," Reichman said, referring to the Lebanese coastal town about 20 kilometers north of the Israeli border.

Against the backdrop of reports of a possible cease-fire agreement, Israel's ground operation in Lebanon has expanded. In recent days, Golani soldiers and members of the armored corps have reached the second line of villages

around the villagers' homes. In that respect, the homes in the second line resemble those of the first line.

"We're cleansing the second line of villages of everything close to the [border] fence and blowing up almost all the houses, because there's virtually no innocent home there," Reichman said. "Every place you see enormous quantities of ammunition. They are simply hornets' nests."

"We found the same infrastructure as in the first line" of villages, his buddy

See SENSE, Page 2