

Israel and Lebanon slated to start indirect talks over land border

Jonathan Lis, Yaniv Kubovich, Ofer Aderet and Reuters

Israel and Lebanon are expected to start indirect negotiations over their land border, the Blue Line, but apparently only after the sides have signed and implemented a cease-fire deal.

Meanwhile, a soldier was reported killed in a drone strike in southern Lebanon. He was identified as Omer Moshe Gaeldor, 30.

The cease-fire agreement taking shape, which is being brokered by U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein, is expected to explicitly state that the sides will open negotiations on the land border under the auspices of the U.S., other countries and the United Nations. There was a "real opportunity" to end the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah and that gaps were narrowing, signalling progress in Washington's efforts to clinch a cease-fire, Hochstein said. "It is now within our grasp. As the window is now, I hope the coming days yield a resolute decision."

Israel and Lebanon have significant disagreements over the location of the border following Israel's withdrawal from the security zone in southern Lebanon in 2000. The border was set to run along the length of the so-called Blue Line, and the United Nations certified that Israel had withdrawn fully to the international border. But Lebanon rejected this finding and listed 13 places along the route where it demanded changes.

The places in dispute for the last 24 years include the



A man clears the debris of a damaged building in the aftermath of an Israeli strike in Zuqaq al-Blat area in Beirut, Lebanon on Tuesday.

Adnan Abidi/Reuters

border along the Rosh Hanikra coast, three locations near the town of Shlomi and Kibbutz Hanita, several locations near the moshavim of Shtula and Shomera and locations facing Har Adir, Avivim, Kibbutz Yiftah, Kiryat Shmona and Metula. Additionally, Lebanon has

for years demanded that it be given control of the Mount Dov region (also known as Shebaa Farms). But Israel claims that this area isn't Lebanese, as it was captured from Syria during the 1967 Six-Day War.

On Monday, Lebanese media reported that Hezbollah

had responded positively to the U.S. proposal, now in its final drafting stages. Hochstein is expected to review Hezbollah's response in Beirut before traveling to Israel to address gaps, particularly regarding the IDF's military leeway in Lebanon. Israel believes outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden and President-elect Donald Trump are aligned on the matter, aiming for a swift agreement to end the conflict before the January transition.

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati told Qatar's Al-Araby TV that his government had given a "positive" response to the cease-fire draft but noted that "several points require discussion." Mikati, who is in ongoing contact with Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, expressed hope for a swift cease-fire and plans to meet with Hochstein

See BORDER, Page 2

Evidence said to tie leak of classified info to PM's associates

Bar Peleg

Investigators in the BibiLeaks case obtained evidence last week implicating two close associates of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu - Yonatan Urich and another individual - in the leak of classified information to German newspaper Bild, Haaretz has learned.

This evidence prompted police to summon Urich for questioning. According to sources familiar with the matter, the leak involved a figure known as "The Hasid," identified as Srulik Einhorn, a close associate of Netanyahu.

Einhorn, a senior adviser to Netanyahu during recent

election campaigns, is well-connected abroad. Authorities wish to question him, but he is currently in Serbia, and it remains unclear when he will return to Israel or when his interrogation will take place.

The investigation suggests that after an attempt by Netanyahu spokesperson Eli Feldstein to leak classified material to a Channel 12 journalist was blocked by the Israeli censor, Urich ordered that the information be passed to Einhorn, who then leaked it to Bild.

In the meantime, the police and Shin Bet believe the public disclosure of the affair and the arrest of suspects have thwarted further theft of classified materials.

Analysis Amos Harel

PM using BibiLeaks to attack democracy

On Monday morning, somebody hung a poster on behalf of the Noam party, a junior, sleepy partner in Netanyahu's coalition, on an Ayalon Highway overpass. "His blood (heaven forbid) is on your hands," was written about Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, next to a picture of Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara.

A few hours later, rumors spread about Netanyahu's next move, to fire Shin Bet director Ronen Bar and maybe also the attorney general. Meanwhile, a deceptive Prison Service announcement was leaked to the media: a hangman's

rope was found in the cell of Eli Feldstein, a Netanyahu spokesman and the key suspect in the stolen intelligence affair.

They later claimed it was an improvised object, the purpose of which is unclear, but it was simultaneously reported that the Prison Service feared "suicidal intentions" by the affair's main figure, and he was moved to another detention cell.

By the evening, coalition ministers and MKs, some quite senior, were competing in making angry calls for the attorney general

See LEAKS, Page 2

PM seeks panel to decide AG's fate; court may step in

Michael Hauser Tov

Top coalition officials admit that notwithstanding aggressive declarations by some ministers against Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara and calls to fire her, there has been no real change in the prime minister's position on the matter in the past few days.

Netanyahu has wanted to

fire Baharav-Miara - who was appointed by the Bennett government - since his first day as prime minister. There are several reasons why he cannot fire her now, especially in view of the conflict of interests related to his trial, and the probability that the High Court of Justice would block the ousting. "The topic is always on the table, it's never been taken

off. But that does not mean that Netanyahu will decide to carry out the move tomorrow morning, or next week, or in a month," a government source told Haaretz.

At the same time, pressure is mounting to fire Shin Bet director Ronen Bar. The night Yoav Gallant was fired as defense minister, Netanyahu declared in an official response issued

by his office that he had no intention of doing so. But, in the past few days, Netanyahu's close aides have been adding to the pressure to execute the move.

Haaretz revealed on Monday that senior defense officials think the reason is Bar's refusal to give Netanyahu an expert opinion that would excuse him from his obligation to give testimony

in his trial, scheduled to begin on December 2.

If Netanyahu and his government choose to fire the attorney general or the Shin Bet director, they will be required to follow the legally mandated procedures. The findings of the Shamgar Commission in 2000 prescribed the rules for appointing and firing the attorney general, as part

of the conclusions from the Bar On-Hebron affair.

It was prescribed at the time that the government has the authority to dismiss the attorney general if "there are prolonged substantive disagreements between the government and the attorney general that create a situation that

See AG, Page 2



Gali Baharav-Miara in the Knesset, Monday. Naama Grynbaum

After U.S. election losses

AIPAC's role in Democratic Party under scrutiny

Ben Samuels

WASHINGTON - As the Democratic Party diagnoses what went wrong in the 2024 elections and charts a potential path forward, the pro-Israel lobby - and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in particular - has found itself under increasing scrutiny.

There has been little new brought to the debate concerning AIPAC's still-evolving role in Democratic electoral politics, but the discourse has empowered the group's defenders and critics alike to double down on their positions.

For AIPAC and its allies, it has been unduly singled out as disproportionately powerful. For its critics, the pro-Israel group's spending is emblematic of the ills of money influencing policy, while its influence - both covert and overt - encourages ill-advised policies, they charge.

The debate has been simmering since AIPAC's United Democracy Project super PAC spent unprecedented sums to unseat two progressive Democrats in their respective primaries over the summer - largely, but not exclusively, bankrolled by

donations from Republican megadonors in an election year that was far and away the most expensive in history.

As internal Democratic debate over the party's ills and its future reached fever pitch in recent days, AIPAC was once again catapulted to the center of the matter.

"Weird to have a whole discourse about 'special interest groups' that completely leaves out corporate and industry lobbies - by far the most influential 'groups' in the Democratic Party," Jeremy Slevin, a senior adviser to AIPAC foe Sen. Bernie Sanders, wrote on Sunday.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the most nationally prominent AIPAC critic despite, ironically, being attacked from the left as an apologist for the group earlier this summer, singled out the pro-Israel organization while echoing Slevin's point.

"If people want to talk about members of Congress being overly influenced by a special interest group pushing a wildly unpopular agenda that pushes voters away from Democrats, then they should be discussing AIPAC," she tweeted in response.

Considering Ocasio-Cor-

tez, already positioned as a rising star within the Democratic Party, has been centered as a key stakeholder in its future, her singling out AIPAC carried more significance than previous attacks.

Jewish Council for Public Affairs CEO Amy Spitalnick, whose discussion with Ocasio-Cortez on antisemitism set off a firestorm in its own right, warned the New York lawmaker that her singling out of AIPAC was misguided.

"There is a critical conversation to be had about AIPAC. But so singularly focusing on them here - when there are a number of special interest groups that operate the same way - plays into dangerous tropes," she stated in response to the New York congresswoman.

Jewish colleagues, including Rep. Dean Phillips, also responded to Ocasio-Cortez's tweet. "If people want to talk about members of Congress being overly influenced by anti-pragmatic and anti-semitic interests pushing a wildly unpopular agenda that pushes voters away from Democrats..." Phillips wrote.

See AIPAC, Page 4

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Rami Shluis

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How Trumpism 2.0 reshaped New York's Haredi political landscape

Etan Nechin

NEW YORK - At Gottlieb's, a restaurant nestled in the heart of South Williamsburg's Satmar community, conversations buzzed around the election. "Are you happy Trump won?" a customer named Yos asked the waiter, who responded with a silent nod.

Nearby, four men cracked open a bottle of brandy and discussed their businesses. "He'll be good for us," one remarked, while another shrugged, "I make a living no matter who's in charge."

When I joined the conversation and asked Yos why he voted for Trump, he replied, "He tells it like it is."

One of the patrons at the restaurant mentioned that Gottlieb's had been set to host Trump for a campaign stop in October. However, fate intervened when the establishment's owner unexpectedly passed away just hours before Trump's anticipated visit. "Poor guy, he was young," someone said. "He was in his seventies," the other said. "Seventies is young," someone replied.

These conversations, though brief and often hesitant from a community wary of speaking with



A Haredi Jew in New York, left, and a local magazine in Boro Park supporting Trump. Etan Nechin

outsiders - especially the press - are telling.

While Kamala Harris is thought to have secured over 70 percent of the overall Jewish vote, the Haredi community's support for Trump has been nearly unanimous, marking a significant and lasting shift that began in 2016. In Williamsburg, support for Trump reached nearly 90 percent; in Borough Park, it was over 70 percent and in



Crown Heights, the center of the Chabad community, it approached 70 percent.

Mark Trencher, founder of Nishma Research, which focuses on studies within the Orthodox Jewish community, explains that most polling about Haredi Jews tends to be inaccurate.

"The main issue is that most polls do not differentiate between Haredi and Modern Orthodox groups. While Orthodox commu-

nities, on average, show about 65 percent support for Trump, in Haredi communities, that number surpasses 90 percent."

At Korn's, a bakery down the block, when I asked about the election results, the seller behind the counter told me, "I mean, Trump or Harris? This wasn't even a choice," he said. When I asked why, the seller raised

See HAREDI, Page 4