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Embattled top IDF lawyer goes missing for hours; PM: Sde Teiman leak is PR disaster

Reservists accused of abusing Palestinian at the Sde Teiman facility call for charges to be dropped

**Josh Breiner,
Michael Hauser Tov,
Yaniv Kubovich
and Jonathan Lis**

IDF Military Advocate General Maj. Gen. Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi was found alive on Sunday evening after being reported missing since morning, after hours of searches along a beach in central Israel.

According to a police statement, she was found safe and sound and has made contact with her family.

An opportunity to destroy

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Israeli police were searching for Tomer-Yerushalmi at Hof HaTzuk beach in Tel Aviv after she had been mreported missing since Sunday morning and failed to attend scheduled meetings. A police source said her car was found at the beach with a note inside. Her phone was traced to the beach, where she was believed to have gone earlier in the day.

The IDF said Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir has ordered the Operations Directorate to deploy all available resources to assist in locat-

ing Tomer-Yerushalmi.

Tomer-Yerushalmi resigned from her post on Friday following the leak of a video showing the abuse of detainees at the Sde Teiman military facility.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that the video leak showing the abuse of a Gaza detainee at an Israeli facility last year may be "the most severe public diplomacy attack Israel has ever faced," as Israel's justice minister and attorney general continue to clash over the latter's jurisdiction to investigate the leak.

The prime minister said the incident "caused enormous reputational damage to Israel and the IDF." He added: "I do not recall an incident of such intensity. This requires an independent, impartial review, and I expect that one will be conducted."

Earlier on Sunday, the IDF reservists accused of abusing the Palestinian from Gaza at the Sde Teiman facility held a press conference, during which their lawyers called for the charges to be dropped. "Cancel the trial immediately and prosecute the military advocate general," said attorney Adi Kedar from the far-right group Honenu, representing the reservists.

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Reservists accused of abusing a detainee in the Sde Teiman affair, alongside their lawyer, Efraim Damari.

Olivier Fitoussi

Hamas returns three more bodies it says are hostages

Jack Khoury, Jonathan Lis and Yaniv Kubovich

The army received three more bodies from the Red Cross Sunday evening, and the coffins were sent to the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Tel Aviv for identification, the PMO said.

Earlier, Hamas had announced that the bodies were found in a tunnel in the southern Gaza Strip. The remains of 11 hostages have yet to be returned to Israel.

At Sunday's cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu termed Hamas' efforts to find and return the dead hostages "pathetic." Hamas, he added, "is trying to deceive us, the U.S. and the world. Obviously, they won't succeed."

Netanyahu informed the ministers that Israel is currently working to eradicate "two pockets of Hamas in the territory under our control" in Gaza – one in Rafah and the other in Khan Yunis.

Despite Netanyahu's statement, Israel hopes pressure on Hamas from Washington and the mediating countries is having an effect, as witnessed by the organization's statement Sunday evening that it was handing over three bodies. After days of dragging its feet, Hamas began taking steps this weekend to return remains it suspects of belonging to the hostages, even if still somewhat lethargically.

Ex-IDF legal chief avoided war crimes probes due to right-wing threats

Yaniv Kubovich

The army's top legal officer, who resigned last week following investigations into the abuse of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention, refrained from launching investigations into several incidents during the Gaza war that could have constituted violations

of international law or even war crimes, according to senior sources in the Israel Defense Forces.

The former military advocate general, Maj. Gen. Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi, resigned on Friday over her involvement in the leaking of a video showing the alleged abuse of a Gazan detainee by Israeli guards at

the Sde Teiman detention facility last year.

Senior reserve officers and investigative officials tasked with examining such incidents said that Tomer-Yerushalmi felt threatened by right-wing incitement against her and found various pretexts to avoid opening or advancing investigations. A reserve officer serving

in the IDF legal chief's office recalled the first time she felt uneasy about Tomer-Yerushalmi's handling of cases. It was after an IDF airstrike in Gaza killed seven volunteers from the World Central Kitchen in April 2024.

"It was very clear that the entire incident violated orders and regulations," the

officer said. After Tomer-Yerushalmi transferred the case to the IDF's operational investigation mechanism, she said "the incident simply disappeared."

"She decided to hand it over to the IDF's operational investigation mechanism. When the findings made it clear that the case required a Military Police investiga-

tion, it never happened."

"There was talk that she was being threatened by the right and that these threats also reached her private home, but today this explains the feeling in the prosecutor's office: that she was avoiding opening investigations and decisions on the most pressing issues." Tomer-Yerushalmi's con-

duct drew further scrutiny last March, when an IDF unit killed 15 medical personnel in Gaza. According to the Gaza Health Ministry, some of the workers were found with their hands bound, and their bodies showed signs of "head and chest injuries" and were "buried in a deep pit to prevent their discovery."

"The whole event is documented, and everyone knows it was wrong. Ethically, operationally, and under the laws of war, it was not acceptable," said a security source familiar with the details.

"They sent the operational investigation team to look into it. Even after the

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Britain's Jews navigating between anxiety, Zionism, class and culture



Anti-immigration activist Tommy Robinson speaking in Tel Aviv, in October.

Amnar Awad/Reuters

tation, and his subsequent visit, enraged U.K. Jews and their representative organizations.

Finally, the Aston Villa soccer team announced it wouldn't let Maccabi Tel Aviv fans attend the two clubs' Europa League match in Birmingham this Thursday. The outcry both in Israel and among British Jews even got Prime Minister Keir Starmer involved, but as things stand, the only yellow and blue jerseys in Birmingham will be on the field.

The U.K. Jewish community is the fifth largest in the world, after the United States, Israel, France and Canada. But its low profile might make you think it was smaller.

Still, despite Israeli media reports about an anxious community under constant attack by antisemites, British Jews are making their

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WZC moves to block Yair Netanyahu from high-paying job

Judy Maltz

Delegates to the World Zionist Congress began voting Sunday on a resolution that effectively blocks the appointment of Yair Netanyahu, the son of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to a senior, high-paying position in the World Zionist Organization.

The move comes a few days after one of the prime minister's close associates attempted, in a surprise move, to secure a top job for Netanyahu's son as part of a power-sharing agreement among a broad-based coalition of factions in key institutions of the Zionist movement.

As a result of Culture Minister Miki Zohar's demand that Netanyahu's son be appointed director of a WZO department responsible for relations with Diaspora Jewry, particularly French speakers, negotiations over the agreement – which had been on the verge of being signed – collapsed.

Zohar, who represented World Likud in the negotiations, said he would not withdraw the demand even if Netanyahu's son himself said he was no longer inter-

ested in the job.

According to well-placed sources, the prime minister urged leaders of the Mizrahi movement over the weekend to postpone the vote, but that was not possible under WZO bylaws.

spots on the executive have been reserved for Likud appointees.

The position would have provided Netanyahu's son with the salary of a government minister along with many benefits.



Yair and Benjamin Netanyahu

Aleksey Nikolskyi/Sputnik Kremlin Pool Photo via AP

The position sought for Netanyahu's son requires him to sit on the WZO executive board. In the resolution drafted over the weekend, delegates will be asked to approve a list of roughly 30 members of the executive, all of them named. Netanyahu's son's name is not on the list, although two

The younger Netanyahu is a highly divisive figure who has shared and endorsed far-right conspiracy theories, and is known for his fierce attacks on the Israeli judiciary and security services. He moved to Miami two years ago for

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