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AG: PM must explain why Ben-Gvir isn't fired

Baharav-Miara responds to petitions that argue for ousting national security minister

Chen Maanit and Josh Breiner

Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara told the High Court of Justice on Thursday that she thinks it should issue a show-cause order requiring Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to explain why he hasn't fired National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

A show-cause order is the necessary first step before the court can order him to fire Ben-Gvir.

"Ben-Gvir is abusing his position to unacceptably influence police activity in the most sensitive fields of law enforcement and is undermining fundamental democratic principles," a brief submitted on Baharav-Miara's behalf said, in response to petitions demanding that Ben-Gvir be fired as the minister in charge of the police.

"The many expressions of his unacceptably interference in the police's work, his violations of the law and of explicit court rulings on this issue, create a clear and harsh picture of repeated violations of the principle of the police's independence," the brief continued, adding that this interference affected the police's work in many areas.

"This is an ongoing (and sometimes sophisticated)

campaign of unacceptable pressure on police officers and commanders," it said. "There is a repeated pattern of violations of the law and contempt for the rule of law, and not just in isolated cases."

The brief also said that "the minister's moves to interfere in the work of the police are becoming a norm and a habit, and the concern over their negative effects is not theoretical but tangible. It is even possible that this could cause irreversible damage."

Humanitarian terror

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It also said Ben-Gvir had violated all the commitments he made to Baharav-Miara, first and foremost the declaration of principles on which the two agreed in April, which forbade Ben-Gvir from intervening in the police's operational decisions, their investigative policies, or their policies on demonstrations. It also limited his intervention in police appointments.

In the brief, Baharav-Miara wrote that she tried "to exhaust all alternative means of maintaining the police's in-

dependence and preventing political intervention," but these "failed to achieve their goal, as the minister violated the law, the judicial decisions related to his matters and the explicit commitments he took upon himself."

Consequently, the brief continued, "at this point, there is no choice but to conclude that it's impossible to protect the public from his systematic efforts to undermine the police's independence."

The brief cited several examples of Ben-Gvir's interference with the police: One was his summoning of Jerusalem's police chief for a reprimand because he was unhappy with the way the Jerusalem police were handling demonstrations.

A second was his efforts to change the way former Tel Aviv police chief Ami Eshed handled demonstrations in that city, followed by Eshed's ouster when he refused to comply.

A third was his intervention in the Central District commander's decision to indict an officer who aimed a Taser at a protester. A fourth was his release of a "policy document" on how the police should handle demonstrations, without consulting either legal

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Protesters in Tarabin demonstrating against the police crackdown on the city.

Itai Ron

The Bibi-ists rang in the new year but they're keeping their same old habits

Analysis **Yossi Verter**

What joy rightist Bibi-ist groups felt at the end of 2025. After an organized and obsessive campaign to dig into the past of Supreme Court President Isaac Amit – a task that employed organizations as well as private individuals – a blemish was found in

his conduct. Once during his 17 years as a Supreme Court justice, Amit had committed the technical violation of failing to provide full disclosure when, as a judge on duty, he issued an interim order in a lawsuit over admission procedures to a board of directors

to which his brother belonged and was about to leave.

Sources say that the judicial ombudsman, the retired judge Asher Kula (who enjoyed his 15 minutes of allotted fame as Justice Minister Yariv Levin's abortive nominee to oversee the military prosecutor leak probe) managed to find this tidbit among the mountains of material and not leave the minister

empty-handed.

So it wasn't a construction violation, but it was something for the lying and inciting slanderers to cling to. Authoritative commentators and politicians (who are sometimes difficult to distinguish) pounced on the prey. A bucket of filth was emptied on Amit's head. Levin demanded that he resign and filed a disciplinary complaint against him.

Amit was also crucified in the media because he hadn't disclosed that his daughter was serving at Army Radio (more than a decade earlier!) when he issued an interim order blocking its closure. Justice Daphne Barak-Erez, who will chair the judicial panel that will hear the petition on closing Army Radio,

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22 Israeli soldiers died by suicide in 2025, the highest number in 15 years

Tom Levinson

Twenty-two active-duty Israel Defense Forces soldiers died by suicide last year, the highest number since 2010, when 28 soldiers took their own lives.

The death toll for 2025 rose to 22 after a mandatory-service lone soldier from the Combat Engineering Corps died by suicide on Wednesday in southern Israel. The Military Police have launched an investigation into his death, and the findings will be submitted to the Military Advo-

cate General for review.

According to IDF data, 12 of those who died by suicide in 2025 were conscripts, nine were reservists and one was a career soldier. Twelve of them were combat soldiers, five served in combat support roles and five served in non-combat roles. Further analysis reveals that 14 of the suicides occurred outside army bases, while eight took place within them. Five of the soldiers were known to and under the care of mental health officers, including a senior drone operator who killed

himself recently after saying he could no longer bear the effects of combat.

Official IDF statistics show that since the start of the war in Gaza, there has been an increase in the number of soldiers who died by suicide while on active duty, whether in regular service or reserves, compared to previous years.

The data indicates that from October 7, 2023, until the end of that year, seven active-duty soldiers died by suicide, and in 2024, 21 soldiers have taken their own lives. In the

Hostages Forum closes HQ

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decade preceding the war, the average annual number of suicides in the army was 12.

According to the IDF, no clear common factors have been identified among the suicide cases since the war began, whether in terms of family status, economic background or service cir-

cumstances. Army officials attribute the rise in suicides during the conflict to the significant increase in the number of personnel on active duty, particularly reservists.

However, according to military sources, a breakdown of the cases shows that since the war began, there has been a decrease in suicides stemming from personal circumstances unrelated to combat deployments. This suggests, the sources added, that many of those who died by suicide

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Many historic firsts

Zohran Mamdani is sworn in as the mayor of New York City



New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani at his inauguration on Thursday.

Tyrene Siu/Reuters

Yona Roberts Golding and Etan Nechin

NEW YORK — New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani was inaugurated outside City Hall Thursday afternoon, after a private swearing-in at midnight. "I stand before you, moved by the privilege of taking this sacred oath, humbled by the faith that you have placed in me," Mamdani said in his address.

"I stand alongside over 1 million New Yorkers who voted for this day nearly two months ago, and I stand just as resolutely alongside those who did not.

"I know there are some who view this administration with distrust or disdain, or who see politics as permanently broken, and while only action can change minds, I promise you this, if you are a New Yorker, I am your mayor."

At 34, Mamdani is the city's youngest mayor. He is also the first African-born, having been born in Uganda. He is also the city's first Muslim mayor, and used a Quran that belonged to his grandmother to take his oath.

Tens of thousands of people attended the "Block Party" event in the streets

surrounding City Hall, as megatons streamed the inauguration to attendees. The relatively young crowd braved freezing temperatures and bounced along to music to stay warm.

U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez delivered opening remarks, saying the inauguration "marks a new era for New York City guided by [Mamdani's] dedication to a working class that makes our beautiful city run."

"New York City has chosen the ambitious pursuit of universal child care, affordable rent and housing and clean and dignified public transit for all," she said.

Could the protests in Iran crack the regime?

It's doubtful the president can alleviate Iran's economic situation while Tehran is under sanctions

Zvi Bar'el

"I hope the situation isn't the prelude to further chaos. If businesspeople want things done properly, their slogans should remain in the economic sphere," Ahmad Bakhsheh Ardestani, an Iranian lawmaker and member of the parliament's Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said by way of summing up his views on the mass protests that erupted in Iran this week.

His suggestion that demonstrators restrict their demands to the economic sphere hints at the regime's fear of



A banner of Qassem Soleimani in Tehran.

Atta Kenare/AFP

the protest spilling into the political arena and from there into violent clashes with security forces, with unforesee-

able consequences.

Ardestani's remarks reflect Tehran's current approach of treating the protests

as a reaction to the economic measures it has taken and plans to continue taking rather than as the beginning of civil disobedience aimed at overthrowing Iranian leadership.

According to this interpretation, the regime has chosen a strategy of engaging the protest leaders in dialogue, listening to their arguments, avoiding confrontation and muscle-flexing as much as possible and taking quick steps that might at least assuage the "economic rage."

"We have a duty to examine the slogans of the protest groups and to respect them. If economic expectations turn into political expectations, many problems will develop,"

Ardestani explained in an interview with the important Iranian economic website Iranian Labour News Agency. The "problems" he was alluding to were a return to the massive demonstrations of 2009, 2017, 2019 and 2022 and the street battles, arrests and killings that accompanied them.

However, each of these major waves of protest had its own reasons, and the regime survived them all. Now too, treating the protest as a clear sign of the beginning of its downfall may prove hasty.

While many hoped that last June's war with Israel would lead to the regime's downfall,

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