



PM can't afford clash with Trump in U.S. visit

Friday's terror attack came as Israel is preventing legal return of West Bank laborers while overlooking porous border

Amos Harel

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Florida this week to meet with U.S. President Donald Trump won't necessarily result in a public confrontation. They actually have reasons to cooperate. Trump needs Netanyahu to advance what he wants to present as the major achievement of his policy in the region: the transition to phase two of his plan for Gaza in the wake of the cease-fire he imposed on Israel and Hamas in October. The transition is supposed to happen around mid-January. At the same time, Netanyahu needs to avoid a clash with his host that would further destabilize his already precarious domestic political situation.

Barak Ravid reported on Channel 12 News and Axios over the weekend that everyone in Trump's inner circle has grown tired of Netanyahu except for the president himself, who still likes the prime minister. Netanyahu made it through a tough period vis-a-vis Joe Biden in the final two years of the former president's term – from Netanyahu's

return to the premiership in December 2022, to the regime coup legislation that the Democratic administration so fiercely opposed and the first months of the war (disagreements over the capture of Rafah and the subsequent Israel Defense Forces offensive against Hezbollah in Lebanon). Arguing with Trump

Straight A's in censorship class
Editorial, Page 5

is more dangerous. Netanyahu will have to try to extract something from his host in return for the concessions required of him in Gaza. At the moment it appears unlikely that he will be able to persuade Trump not to proceed to phase two, despite the clear risk that Hamas will retain civilian control (and military power) west of the Yellow Line in the Strip.

IDF officers who are in direct contact with members of the U.S. Central

Command, which operates the liaison center in Kiryat Gat, say the United States has almost complete control over events on the ground. American officers are involved in almost every Israeli move from the outset, they monitor every truck bringing humanitarian aid into Gaza and exert constant pressure on the IDF to meet Israel's obligations.

These involve the continued delivery of aid (the U.S. is demanding 4,200 trucks per week, a goal that has not yet been met) along with accelerated work to dismantle tunnels and clear debris from the area where the Americans plan to build a pilot community on the ruins of Rafah for displaced Palestinians. The U.S. pressure on Israel is expected to intensify and become more focused after the shift to phase two, ahead of the deployment of the international force. Israel remains skeptical, but it's likely that Netanyahu would rather the move not succeed for other reasons, without being accused of failing to cooperate.

A serious terrorist attack occurred Friday, when a Palestinian man from

See BEACH, Page 2



The scene of the attack, Friday.

Gil Eliyahu

IDF imposes curfew on West Bank town after two killed in terror attack in the north

Yaniv Kubovich and Matan Golan

The police and the Shin Bet security service said Saturday that they arrested two brothers of the assailant who carried out a deadly ramming and stabbing attack in northern Israel on Friday that left two people dead.

The two brothers, aged 30 and 33, were arrested near Arraba in the Galilee, and are suspected of having stayed

with the assailant in Israel over the past several days.

The Israel Defense Forces said the assailant, from the Palestinian town of Qabatiyah in the northern West Bank, entered Israel without a permit several days before the attack.

According to an initial investigation, the assailant ran over a 16-year-old boy on Yaakov Makhlof Street in Beit She'an, lightly wounding him, before continuing to the

city's Shomron Street, where he ran over 68-year-old Shimon Mordechai, critically wounding him.

Mordechai was pronounced dead shortly afterward.

After leaving Beit She'an, the assailant continued to the area of Kibbutz Ein Harod, where he fatally stabbed 18-year-old Aviv Maor, who was later found dead by the side of the road.

After continuing about 14

Police's legal adviser resigns

News, Page 2

kilometers (8.5 miles) west to Afula, the assailant attempted to run over another man and assaulted him with a rock. The man was lightly wounded.

Police arrived at the scene

about 10 minutes afterward, according to witnesses.

The assailant was shot and apprehended in Afula. He was moderately wounded.

Following the attack, Defense Minister Israel Katz said he instructed the Israeli military to "forcefully and immediately" act against Qabatiyah, and the military confirmed its forces were raiding the assailant's house

See TERROR, Page 2

Ex-PM aide: Official said he could bury IDF leak probe

Bar Peleg

A senior official from the Prime Minister's Office told Eli Feldstein – the prime minister's former spokesman allegedly involved in leaking classified documents to German newspaper Bild – that he could quash a military probe into the leak, according to Feldstein's testimony to the Shin Bet secu-

urity service last year. After his questioning, a Shin Bet investigator had written in an official memorandum that Feldstein's version would be checked "from every possible angle," Haaretz has learned. Feldstein, however, has never been questioned about the matter since, neither during his interrogation by the Shin Bet nor during subsequent

police questioning.

Feldstein revealed in an interview with Kan public television this week that the senior official allegedly involved in obstructing the investigation was the office's chief of staff, Tzachi Braverman, who has denied the accusations. More than a year after Feldstein first raised the allegation with Shin Bet, police have only

now moved to investigate – and are currently awaiting authorization from the State Prosecutor's Office.

Braverman is set to assume his post of Israel's Ambassador to the United Kingdom in the coming months.

The office of Attorney General Gali Baharav-Mirara declined to comment on a question from Haaretz regarding the status of the

law enforcement investigation and what the Shin Bet investigator recorded in the memorandum about examining the allegations.

Feldstein's version of events raises problems, a source in the legal system told Haaretz. His claims have still not been examined, partly because he never explicitly mentioned Braverman's name until

his interview with Israel's public broadcaster Kan on Monday. Feldstein also did not provide any evidence to support his claims. This was Feldstein's first public interview since accusations against him were made.

In addition, the existence of the internal investigation within the military was

See BURY, Page 2



Prime Minister Netanyahu in the Knesset last year. Sraya Diamant

Hamas proud of its 'gains' but it hasn't convinced ordinary Gazans



A mother who lost her hands in an Israeli airstrike with her daughter at their destroyed home in Jabalya on Tuesday.

Bashar Taleb/AP

Amira Hass

Just like well-run institutions – governmental or non-governmental – that submit periodic reports on their activities and performance, Hamas has just published an assessment of its October 7 attack and the aftermath up to the cease-fire that was sealed two years later.

Like such institutions, Hamas is presumably thinking about the stakeholders who will read its report. In the document released Wednesday – 36 pages in Arabic, 42 in English – it's clear that the people of the Gaza Strip aren't among the stakeholders. They can't be

partners to the picture of achievements and resilience described in the text.

In conversations with friends and family, but not for publication or discussion with the Israeli media, even loyal Hamas supporters in the enclave have questions about the attack and the considerations behind it. They aren't getting answers.

Those who aren't supporters of Hamas in Gaza,

people who demand that Hamas take stock of itself, won't find a hint of this in the text. They'll find "disdain for their blood and suffering ... a blatant ignoring of reality, an attempt to convince people that the biggest tragedy in the modern history of Palestine and Gaza was a 'national necessity' and a historic achievement," as one Gazan who remained in the Strip wrote.

A woman who left the enclave at the beginning of the war and has read Hamas' document concludes from it that "these people will never admit their fatal mistakes and will never feel the suffering and tragedies of our people, since they are insensitive and have no conscience."

These two writers were never supporters of the rival organization, Fatah, and can't be suspected of being pro-Israel. Both of them – like all Palestinians and not only them – will gladly sign the report's main framing of the history of the conflict: Zionism as a colonialist-settler movement, with Israel as a dispossessing and expelling entity by nature. Not for a moment do they forget that Israel chose, as a policy, to

See GAINS, Page 4

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First country to extend recognition

Israel recognizes self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland formally

Jonathan Lis and Haaretz

Israel has formally recognized Somaliland, the self-declared breakaway region of Somalia, as an independent state, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on Friday, making Israel the first country to extend such recognition.

"This declaration is in the spirit of the Abraham Accords signed at the initiative of President Trump," Netanyahu's office said, adding that he spoke with the East African leader and that Israel "plans to immediately expand ... cooperation in the fields of agriculture, health, technology and the economy."

"Over the past year, based on an extensive and ongoing dialogue, relations between Israel and Somaliland have taken shape," Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar said on X. Somaliland is an unrecognized state in the Horn of Africa bordering Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti. It unilaterally broke away from Somalia in 1991, but has not been recognized by the international community as an independent state.

Somalia considers Somaliland part of its sov-

ereign territory and denounced the move later Friday, calling it a "deliberate attack to its sovereignty."

"The Federal Government underscores that Somalia is a single, indivisible sovereign state," Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre's office said in a statement, noting any such recognition was null under international law.

Hamas to elect new bureau chief
News, Page 2

"Somalia makes clear that it will not permit the establishment of any foreign military bases or arrangements on its territories that would draw Somalia into proxy conflicts," the statement read. Somalia also expressed its support for Palestinian statehood.

In April, Sa'ar first met with representatives of the Somaliland president for a meeting that launched the process. Since then, there have been secret visits by senior officials.

Egypt said Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty held

phone calls on Friday with his counterparts from Somalia, Turkey and Djibouti to discuss what they described as dangerous developments in the Horn of Africa following Israel's announcement.

The ministers condemned Israel's recognition of Somaliland, reaffirmed their full support for Somalia's unity and territorial integrity, and warned that recognizing breakaway regions poses a threat to international peace and security, Egypt's foreign ministry said. The African Union also rejected recognition of Somaliland.

Qatar "categorically rejects" the mutual recognition announcement on Friday between Israel and the Somaliland region, a statement by the Qatari foreign ministry said.

According to the statement, "the move also undermined the sovereignty and unity of the Federal Republic of Somalia."

It added that Israel "should work to permanently end the war in Gaza, instead of undermining international legitimacy and maintaining its reckless

See SOMALILAND, Page 4