



U.S.-Iran talks expected to continue, Tehran warns of 'wall of mistrust'

**Liza Rozovsky,
Ben Samuels and Reuters**

Iran and the United States held high-stakes negotiations in Oman on Friday in an effort to overcome sharp differences over Tehran's nuclear program, but a dispute over widening the agenda risks derailing diplomacy and triggering another Middle East conflict.

After some five hours, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson said the talks were over "for now," with no clear timeline for resumption.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi added that negotiators will return to their capitals for consultations, with talks expected to continue. He emphasized that "the wall of mistrust should be

overcome" to allow progress.

Donald Trump called the talks "very good," adding, "Iran looks like they want to make a deal very badly – as they should." Addressing reporters aboard Air Force One en route to Florida from Washington, the U.S. president said, "Last time, they decided maybe not to do it, but they probably feel differently. We'll see what

the deal is. It'll be different than last time."

When asked by reporters how long he is willing to wait before striking Iran, Trump said that the U.S. fleets heading to Iran "have to get in position."

"We have plenty of time. If you remember Venezuela, we waited around for a while. We're in no rush," he said, adding that the next

round of talks was set for "early next week." Trump said he prefers to reach a deal, but "they know the consequences if they don't."

Araghchi told Iran's state-run IRNA news agency that the talks focused solely on the nuclear issue and that Tehran will not negotiate other matters with Washington.

Iran's state media reported that Tehran has informed

the U.S. it will not give up its right to enrich uranium on its territory, calling it a "red line." Araghchi emphasized that Iran is willing to continue diplomatic efforts to prevent the possibility of a U.S. strike.

The U.S. was represented in Oman by Mideast special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will meet Trump on Wednesday to discuss developments in Iran, the Prime Minister's Office said on Saturday.

Before the talks began Friday, Trump issued an executive order imposing tariffs on countries that acquire any goods or services from Iran.

The White House said the order "imposes a system that

allows the United States to impose additional tariffs on imports from any country that directly or indirectly purchases, imports, or otherwise acquires any goods or services from Iran."

The 25 percent tariffs follow through on a threat made by Trump last month. The White House has said

See **IRAN**, Page 3

PM releases selective, redacted security records in bid to shift blame for Oct. 7

Jonathan Lis

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday released excerpts from security cabinet meetings in a document that reiterates the claim that, although the defense establishment failed in its security assessments ahead of the October 7 attack, he had fulfilled his responsibilities, in the latest attempt to distance himself from the state's failures on the day of the attack.

Netanyahu said the transcripts were part of a document he submitted in December to the State Comptroller's Office for its probe into the attack. The partially redacted transcripts, dating from the 2014 Gaza war up until the morning of October 7, 2023, include select quotes

from confidential security cabinet meetings.

Unlike Netanyahu, other participants in security cabinet meetings are not cleared to disclose what was said there or in sessions that the prime minister chose not to mention in the document.

The document highlights instances when Netanyahu requested the killing of Hamas and other terror group leaders, while defense officials argued Hamas had been deterred and pursued measures to ease civilian and economic restrictions to keep the front calm.

The released transcripts present Netanyahu as having warned others about a wide-scale attack by Hamas in the period leading up to

See **EXCERPT**, Page 2

Analysis **Amos Harel**

Cherry-picked quotes aim to thicken fog

Benjamin Netanyahu had already pulled the trick he tried to repeat Thursday evening. In 2016, the state comptroller was about to release a harsh report on the neglect of the threat of Hamas' attack tunnels. From those conduits during the war two years earlier, the terror group launched a series of lethal raids.

So in 2016, the prime minister met with journalists for long meetings that were labeled background

briefings, where he presented select quotes from security meetings. The goal was to convince the media that he hadn't taken part in the debacle; it was defense officials who were negligent in monitoring the threat, and Netanyahu had warned them about the danger.

The state comptroller at the time, Yosef Shapira, fell into the trap with his harsh report that didn't absolve

See **FOG**, Page 4



Protesters calling for a state commission of inquiry into the Oct. 7 disaster, in Tel Aviv on Saturday evening, following Netanyahu's release of excerpts from security cabinet meetings.

Itai Ron

'Someone finds it convenient Arabs killing each other'

Adi Hashmonai

A 30-year-old man was fatally shot on Friday in the Arab town of Yafia in northern Israel. The police are reportedly searching for suspects and have begun investigating the incident, which they determined to be criminal.

Since the beginning of the year 39 people have died by homicide in Israel, 34 of them Arab citizens. Preparations are underway for a three-day strike that would halt all work and economic activity in the country's Arab communities to protest rising violent crime and ongoing government neglect of Arab society, the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee stated on Thursday.

On Thursday, five Arab men were fatally shot in two incidents. In the morning, three men were shot and killed at the entrance of a residential building in the Arab town of Suweid Hamira in the north. Ishaq Suweid, 28, and Basel Suweid, 25, cousins, died at the scene. Ibrahim Suweid, 64, Ishaq's father, was declared dead soon after admission to Haifa's Rambam Medical Center. The police said they suspect a family feud as the motive.

That two men, ages 30 and 40, were shot dead in East Jerusalem's Shoafat refugee camp. Police said they were searching for the suspect, who fled the scene.

The tiny community of Suweid Hamira, home to 55 families, was recognized as a village 30 years ago, but remained unknown to most of the Israeli public until Thursday morning.

Witnesses and police sources said Basel and Ishaq Suweid were shot in their car. Basel died at the scene; Ishaq, who was wounded, got out of the car and ran home, pursued by at least one gunman who shot and killed Basel and his father, Ibrahim, when the latter opened the door for him.

Villagers gathered nearby shortly after the shooting, looking at the police tape that marked the crime scene. "I think the police are deliberately doing nothing to stop the violence in the Arab community," one resident said in a whisper, trying to contain his anger. "I believe this is an order from above."

He explained, "Someone finds it convenient that Arabs are murdering each other."

See **MURDER**, Page 3

Emails: Ex-PM Ehud Barak stayed regularly in Epstein's NY flat



Ehud Barak at an anti-government protest last year.

Tomer Appelbaum

The correspondence also shows that Barak's wife, Nili Priel Barak, spoke frequently with Epstein and his employees, scheduled meetings between the couple and the convicted sex offender and kept contact details for some of his staff to reach them directly. Priel Barak updated the staff on the couple's arrival dates and, according to the messages, there were numerous visits. In July 2015, the couple informed Epstein's staff that they would be staying in the apartment for three months. Epstein's employees corresponded with his personal assistant, Lesley Groff, about the frequent cleaning of the apartment, the couple's requests during their stays, and the items and groceries to be left for them upon arrival – such as flowers, coffee and food.

In an October 2015 exchange, one employee wrote to another: "Jeffrey is asking if you can get faster internet to apt 11J ... Ehud is requesting it ... looks like this slowly this is becoming his apartment!" In May 2019, Groff informed Priel Barak that 24 boxes belonging to the couple had been moved into the apartment.

See **EPSTEIN**, Page 4

HAARETZ

Online now

Even when they support Israel

Most U.S. Jews do not identify as Zionists – survey

Citing Gaza war crimes

Netherlands' next gov't to reduce Israel arms deals



Jon Gambrell/AP

haaretz.com

Attorney general:

Justice minister breaking law by failing to appoint judges

Chen Maanit

Israel's attorney general informed the High Court on Thursday that Justice Minister Yariv Levin is acting unlawfully and harming the public by blocking the appointment of judges to Israel's lower courts, despite the judiciary's heavy caseload.

Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara submitted her response to the High Court of Justice together with the Courts Administration, as part of a petition submitted to require Levin to convene the Judicial Appointments Committee.

She called on the High Court to require Levin to convene the committee to appoint judges to the unfilled positions in the magistrates' and district courts, and also asked the court to order Levin to act quickly to appoint justices to the Supreme Court as well – which has been functioning with only 11 out of 15 justices.

Levin called Baharav-Miara's arguments false. "During my term in the Justice Ministry, an enormous number of some 200 judges were appointed, and many new positions were added at my initiative," said Levin.

According to the minister, he is working to ensure judicial appointments are made with broad consensus, while "some members of the committee choose to refuse any compromise and impose a veto on worthy candidates such as Dr. Bakshi and Dr.

to overhaul the Israeli legal system. Levin has been trying for a long time to appoint Bitton – as well as Dr. Aviad Bakshi, the head of the legal department at the Kohelet forum – as Supreme Court justices, but most of the members of the Judicial Ap-



Gali Baharav-Miara

Noam Revkin Fenton

Biton, both for the Supreme Court and other courts," referring to Levin's preferred candidates for new Supreme Court justices, who also drafted the judicial overhaul legislation.

Dr. Raphael Bitton is on the law school faculty at Sapir College, and was one of Levin's closest advisers on formulating the legislation

pointments Committee oppose their candidacy.

Baharav-Miara wrote in response to Levin that "the minister is neither permitted nor authorized to grant a total and exclusive weight to the consideration of broad consensus" in the appointment of judges.

See **JUDGES**, Page 2