



Trump, with PM in D.C., says he insisted talks with Iran continue

Ben Samuels
and Liza Rozovsky

U.S. President Donald Trump said "nothing definitive" was reached after a three-hour meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, adding that he "insisted that negotiations with Iran continue."

According to the president's post on Truth Social, if a deal with Iran can be reached, he "let the prime minister know that will be a preference." Trump said the two also discussed "the tremendous progress being made in Gaza, and the region in general."

U.S. Jews' rising anxiety

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Netanyahu said that in the meeting, which was attended by Trump and his team, they "discussed negotiations with Iran, Gaza and regional developments.

"The prime minister discussed Israel's security needs in the context of the negotiations, and the two agreed to continue their close coordination and relationship," he added.

Netanyahu arrived at the White House on Wednesday morning to meet with Trump. He was not welcomed with the traditional honor guard, but drove up out of view of the press and entered through the working side entrance traditionally used by staff.

Ahead of the meet-



Netanyahu with Trump at the White House on Wednesday.

ing, Netanyahu officially joined the Board of Peace in a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The agenda for the board's Washington summit has yet to be published or shared with invitees.

Minutes after the meet-

ing, The Wall Street Journal reported that the Pentagon has ordered a second aircraft carrier strike group to get ready for deployment to the Middle East as the U.S. military braces for a possible strike on Iran, citing three U.S.

officials, who said Trump hadn't officially ordered its deployment.

However, ahead of the meeting, U.S. Vice President JD Vance signaled that the administration's policy toward Iran is focused on preventing the

regime from developing nuclear weapons, and said that regime change is "up to the Iranian people."

Vance said he thinks Trump would "continue to preserve" optional military actions against Iran, adding that efforts would be

focused on trying "to reach a good outcome through negotiation."

"If the Iranian people want to overthrow the regime, that's up to the Iranian people. What we're

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PMO calls to drop 'massacre' from name of bill to mark Oct. 7

Noa Shpigel
and Noa Limone

A representative of the Prime Minister's Office on Wednesday requested to remove the word "massacre" from the title of a bill for the commemoration of the Hamas-led attacks on October 7, 2023.

The representative, Yoel Elbaz, argued for the title "Simhat Torah events - October 7."

During a discussion on the bill in the Education Committee, Elbaz said that instead of the word massacre, the word events or riots should be written, "just as the 1929 Riots were called that – and not the 1929 Massacre."

He said this should be done because there was also fighting in addition to the massacre.

"The word massacre will be written within the law – later on, just as it will be written that there was murder and rape and all the things that were done," he explained during the discussion.

In response, the acting chairman of the Knesset Education Committee, Shas' Yosef Taib, said he feared that removing the word massacre from the bill's title would harm commemoration in the long run. "We all know there was a massacre, but the question is whether our children and grandchildren will know there was a massacre," he said.

Elbaz replied that the commemoration authority to be established under the bill would be responsible for ensuring the massacre is remembered. "In the authority's activities, we wrote that it would be tasked with documenting, preserving and making information acces-

sible," he said. "Therefore, I don't think that [the memory of the massacre] will depend on the name of the law, but on the authority's activities."

The opposition attacked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu following his representative's remarks. Yisrael Beiteinu Chairman Avigdor Lieberman said that "the October 7 prime minister is joining antisemites who deny that there was a massacre against Jews."

"Thousands of Israelis were massacred, raped, murdered and abducted – we will not let him escape responsibility," he added.

Rothman tapes his legal adviser

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The Democrats' chairman, Yair Golan, said this was an attempt to engineer the public's attitude. "You can't brand a massacre as an 'event' and a national disaster as 'national revival,'" Golan said. "Netanyahu, no amount of spin will clear you: You were the head, you abandoned [them] and you are to blame."

He added, "The public will remember exactly who was in charge on October 7 and who led us into the abyss. This disgrace is recorded in your name for eternity."

Former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said that "only a detached government tries to erase a massacre etched in blood into every Jewish heart." Former lawmaker Gadi Eisenkot also attacked the prime minister's

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4 activists who shot flares at Netanyahu's home face terrorism charges

Chen Maanit

Four anti-government activists will face terrorism charges for firing maritime flares at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's home in Caesarea in 2024 after the state prosecutor rejected a mediating judge's recommendation, Haaretz has learned.

State Prosecutor Amit

Aisman rejected the recommendation put forward by Haifa District Court Judge Nitzan Silman as part of the mediation process. As a result, the case will be heard in court.

A legal source familiar with the case told Haaretz that Aisman is wary of reaching a compromise with the defendants' lawyers given that the case involves Ne-

tanyahu's private residence. The source added that three district court judges – Ziad Falah, Shlomo Banjo and Nitzan Silman – who heard the case at various stages, determined there was "no legal basis" for charging the four with terrorism and arson.

According to the source, Aisman fears making a decision that could anger Netanyahu.

Brig. Gen. (res.) Ofer Doron, his son Gal Doron, Itay Yaffe and Amir Sade were accused of firing two marine flares in November 2024 toward Netanyahu's residence in Caesarea. The flares

landed in the yard while the prime minister and his family were not at home.

A month later, prosecutors charged the four with terrorism-related offenses, reckless use of fire and attempted arson. Ofer and Gal Doron were also charged with obstruction of justice after the

father attempted to conceal his son's involvement.

When the indictment was filed, Haaretz reported that Aisman chose to charge the four with the grave offense of committing a terrorist act, which would double their potential sentence if convicted, despite opposition from some

senior officials within the State Prosecutor's Office.

According to those officials, Aisman was seeking to project a tough stance even against individuals who acted against Netanyahu, particularly after filing charges against the prime minister's former aide, Eli Feldstein, a key suspect in the Qatargate affair.

Falah, who presided over

the detention proceedings, wrote in a December 2024

ruling that there was prima facie evidence that a terrorist act had been committed. However, when ordering the defendants' release, he noted that the evidence presented by prosecutors to support the attempted arson charge was weak.

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Netanyahu officially joins Trump's Board of Peace News Page 2

18,500 Gazans requiring medical treatment abroad are still stuck

Naghm Zbeedat

Amira Saleh spends most of her days moving between Nasser Hospital's waiting rooms in Khan Yunis. Her 9-year-old son, Yezan, was injured by shrapnel that entered his upper arm and shoulder last summer. The

tion through the Hamas-run Health Ministry in October. She has submitted medical reports and letters from doctors. Each document was carefully folded and placed in a plastic folder she carries everywhere.

The Rafah border crossing – which partially re-

and we are still here." Saleh's young son is one of the more than 18,500 wounded and sick Palestinians awaiting medical evacuation from the Gaza Strip. This includes people with complex blast injuries, spinal damage, cancer, kidney failure and heart disease as well as children requiring reconstructive surgery.

Aid groups working in Gaza say the number fluctuates as new injuries crop up and others die while waiting. Save the Children has warned that at current evacuation rates, it would take more than a year to transfer all urgent cases, even if no new injuries occurred.

"They tell us the process is moving," Saleh says, adding she stays awake at night as her son complains of pain. "They say names are reviewed, security checks are done, coordination takes time. I understand that. But my child does not understand time like this."

In November 2023, 70 percent of Gaza's hospitals became non-functional due to Israeli airstrikes. Almost three months after the October cease-fire announcement, the health system remains critically depleted.

"When Rafah reopened, people congratulated us," she says. "They said, 'Now you will go.' But days passed,

injury damaged nerves and blood vessels, and doctors say he needs specialized surgery that can't be conducted in Gaza, where only half of all hospitals are partially functional.

"He cannot lift his arm," she says. "At first, we thought it was temporary. Now they tell us it will get worse if nothing is done."

Saleh applied for eva-

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Judge lifts travel ban
Allows Braverman, PM's chief of staff, to leave the country

Tucker Carlson to visit Israel
Reportedly coming to interview U.S. envoy Huckabee



Jon Cherry/AP

haaretz.com

'Most people don't believe we are Jews'

History, hardship, complex identity of India's unknown 'lost tribe'

Sayan Lohit

In the remote village of Kothareddypalem, tucked away in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh in southern India, the sounds of Hebrew prayer rise above the hum of agricultural labor. Here, the Star of David is etched onto the door frames of modest homes – the same homes where, for generations, the residents were defined by their status as part of an "untouchable" caste.

The Bnei Menashia community of the northeast Indian states of Manipur and Mizoram grabbed global attention in November as Israel granted a plan for the emigration of the 5,800-member strong community to the country by 2030. While there has been significant coverage of this community since, another Judaizing community in India remains largely ignored.

Separated from their Menashia brethren by more than 1,500 km (932 miles), this community calls themselves Bnei Ephraim, claiming descent from the synonymous Lost Tribe of Israel.

The story of the Bnei Ephraim is inextricably



The Bnei Jacob Synagogue in Kothareddypalem, India, built by the Bnei Ephraim. Sayan Lohit

linked to the struggle for dignity in the Indian caste system. Prior to the colonial era, the Madigas were an "untouchable" community located outside the four-fold Hindu caste system based on varna, or social status.

They were mostly tanners, animal shearers, slaughterers and cobblers. Like other lower castes,

their caste status haunted them as the upper caste converts to Christianity kept the social discrimination alive, often refusing to dine, pray or intermarry with them. Only in 1950 was discrimination based on caste declared illegal by the Constitution of India. By

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Palestinian patients at Khan Yunis' Red Crescent Hospital waiting to be evacuated from Gaza, last week. Bashar Taleb/AP

opened on February 1 after being effectively shut since the Israeli army's Rafah offensive in May 2024 – has become the final step in a long process of referrals, paperwork, waiting lists and uncertainty for patients and their families.

"When Rafah reopened, people congratulated us," she says. "They said, 'Now you will go.' But days passed,

they used to suffer from various forms of discrimination from other upper caste groups. In the early 19th century, during India's colonial era, many of them converted to Christianity due to the efforts of American Baptist missionaries to escape from this caste-based oppression.

However, the ghost of